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# The South Haven Beacon

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## South Haven man pleads guilty to illegal cockfighting

***By Elizabeth Ferszt***
***Contributing Writer***

A new incident of illegal cockfighting was recently uncovered in South Haven. According to the Van Buren County Prosecutor's Office, defendant Jesse Gamino (age 57) pleaded guilty to one count of animal fighting on April 21, 2026 in 36th Circuit Court, Paw Paw.

Gamino agreed to forfeit all animals, weapons, and related equipment allegedly "used to hurt birds" in exchange for the plea deal, according to the Prosecutor. In addition to his pending sentence, Gamino must pay restitution to Hidden Acres Safe Haven, an animal rescue outfit in Dowagiac that took in forty (40) abused roosters allegedly used for cockfighting at Gamino's house.

The original charges included five felonies: three counts of MCL 75049-A: Animals— Fighting; two counts of MCL 75049-C: Animals— Fighting/Equipment. Four of the charges were dismissed, as Gamino pled to only one count of MCL 75049-A. Currently, Gamino is out on a PR bond, but faces a sentencing hearing on May 26 at 11am in front of Hon. Kathleen Brickley, a judge in the 36th circuit.

According to Jodie Wiederkehr, campaigns director at SHARK (Showing Animals Respect and Kindness), an animal rights group based in the Chicago area, Gamino owns the property raided on Dec. 20, 2025 by police, after they received a credible tip from SHARK that an illegal cockfight was underway.

"Gamino's excuse was that a large group of people showed up at his place with birds and then fled when police arrived," Wiederkehr said.

While SHARK is bold and innovative in using almost any means to detect and uncover animal abuse, especially cockfighting, this time its drones were not used. "SHARK's drones were not flown in South Haven (on Dec. 20), as it was quite a windy night," Wiederkehr said in an email.

When asked how they were able to provide the information to police, Wiederkehr said SHARK received an anonymous tip which they in turn sent to local law enforcement. "We were very pleased with the quick response from Police," she said.

SHARK executive director Steve Hindi stated in a phone call on April 24 that while they cannot reveal their sources, they receive many credible tips from the public who may notice "a lot of cars all of the sudden showing up" to a particular property or hear noises associated with animal fights.

Wiederkehr, who was also on that call, said, "We hope he [Gamino] gets the harshest sentence possible." Wiederkehr and Hindi both believe that cockfighting is connected to a larger criminal enterprise, that may include human trafficaking, domestic or intimate partner violence, child abuse, drugs, gangs, gambling, prostitution, and other unsavory activities. "Animal fighting is illegal in all 50 states," Wiederkehr said. This includes both chickens (birds) and dogs.

Wiederkehr and Hindi strongly assert that "there is a link between animal cruelty and violence against humans," including women and children. Wiederkehr mentioned that serial killers often start off with abusing and killing animals. She believes that animal abuse is not taken seriously enough.

"Unfortunately, oftentimes," Wiedekehr said,

*images courtesy of Jodie Wiederkehr at SHARK*

"they only get a slap on the wrist and probation," alluding to the fact that Gamino is out on personal recognizance bond with no dollar amount as collateral, and four of his five charges were dropped.

"He should have not been allowed to plea and should have been made to give up the names of the others who were there," Wiederkehr said. Apparently, the other alleged cockfighters all fled during the raid, much like what happened in the October 2025 cockfighting incident in Hopkins Twp. In ALLEGAN COUNTY leaving 36 birds dead and only one person arrested and charged.

SHARK is listed as a 501(c)(3) charitable corporation that is domiciled in Geneva, Illinois. On their webpage they state that they were founded about 18 years ago by active hunter and gun owner, Steve Hindi, who "witnessed a horrific example of live pigeon shooting" that changed his perspective on killing animals, in particular, birds. Hindi was elected to the Animal Rights Hall of Fame in 2006. To report a tip, call "Report Cockfighting!" at 630-385-0244.

## Rotarians, kindergartners celebrate Arbor Day together

***By Tom Renner***

Arbor Day in South Haven was celebrated by the traditional planting of a tree in a city park on Friday, April 24. South Haven Rotarians joined kindergarteners from Lincoln School in planting a red oak in Stanley Johnston Park which is known for its stately oak trees. It marked the eighth year of a partnership between the city, school system and Rotarians celebrating the community's designation as a Tree City USA.

For the Rotarians, it also commemorated Rotary International founder Paul Harris who traveled worldwide in the 1920s and 1930s planting "Friendship Trees". Parks Superintendent Aaron Priebe provided an outdoor lesson on trees which included a ride in a bucket truck to the top of the stately Johnston oaks.

## Christian Science Reading Room goes on market

***By James Windell***

Sandra Tyrrell remembers when the South Haven Christian Science Church was a thriving religious community.

"My late husband and I moved to South Haven in 1989 and I became a member in 1991," says Sandra Tyrrell, one of the last remaining members of the Christian Science Society in South Haven.

She says that membership changed over the last several years.

"I would say that after 2013 that's when we started to notice a change," she recalls. "We would have tourists who came during the summer and then they would leave."

Whereas once the church was full for services, the demographics of South Haven changed and the membership of the church dwindled. "People moved away and more retirees stayed in Florida," she says. "We just experienced attrition."

However, from 1917 to late 2025, regular services were held at the church. Tyrrell says that the lot at 624 Phoenix Street, South Haven, was purchased in 1916 for $1600. The architect for the church was Howard Lovewell Cheney, from Chicago, who designed the church as it remains today.

A Chicago-born architect and engineer, Cheney was widely recognized for his federal, civic, and transportation-related buildings during the mid-20th century. He was the architect for the U.S. Treasury Department's Public Buildings Branch, designing federal buildings across the country, and he was supervising architect for the Chicago Tribune Tower construction. His architectural style leaned toward Art Moderne, Streamline Moderne, and Art Deco, often integrating engineering innovations.

Although Tyrrell doesn't possess any detailed information about a founding date for the South Haven society, Christian Science began spreading through Michigan in the late 19th century. Early adoption across the state was driven by individuals seeking spiritual healing and guidance, often corresponding directly with Mary Baker Eddy or her students. These early efforts helped establish Christian Science groups throughout Michigan, including smaller communities such as South Haven.

With the decline in membership in recent years, the membership made a decision to sell the Christan Science building in South Haven.

The South Haven society, however, appears to have remained active at least into the mid-2010s, based on service listings updated in 2016.

Amy O'Sullivan, a realtor with Jacqua Realty, is handling the listing of the church.

"The church has disbanded and is no longer a church, and that's why they're selling," O'Sullivan said during a recent open house of the building.

"It's located in a residential neighborhood, so it's zoned R1-B," she said. "Any change in use will need approval from the Planning Commission and the City."

The one-story building with a finished basement features original stained-glass windows, wood floors, and solid wood doors and railings. "This is craftsmanship that you don't see anymore," O'Sullivan pointed out.

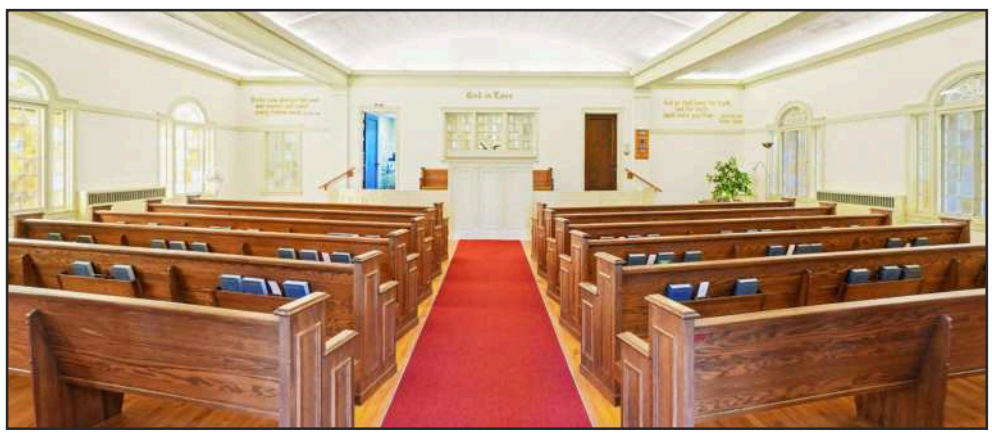
O'Sullivan and some of the people who showed up for the open house speculated about possible uses of the building. "It would make a nice community center or even a home --- with renovation," O'Sullivan said.

According to O'Sullivan, the building could be used as a church without rezoning. A letter from South Haven's Zoning Administrator, Kelly Getman-Dissette, states that because it is zoned R1-B, permitted uses include as an adult foster care or small group home, a child care facility, a single-family residence, or certain public facilities.

"Any change of use requires special land use approval from the Planning Commission," Getman-Dissette wrote in her letter. "Any potential businesses outside of those listed above would require rezoning."

Commenting that it is a lovely building, Tyrrell was sad that the building will be sold. "It really holds a lot of happy memories," she says. "The people that we met. It's been wonderful. We had a great run from 1917. But, I'm hoping that whoever buys the building will do something special with it. Like use it for a non-profit organization. That would be nice."

For more information about the listing, contact Amy O'Sullivan at Jaqua Realtors at 269-214-1257 or aosullivan@jaquareaqltors.com



# Michigan Flywheelers Museum hosts annual Farm History Day

*Pat Ingalls*

***By James Windell***

One of the signature events put on by the Michigan Flywheelers Museum every year is Farm History Day – a day when the early 20th-century rural life is honored with hands-on, immersive experiences designed especially for students and families.

"Farm History Day started as a way we could promote education and interest in early farm life," explains Patrick Ingalls, Michigan Flywheelers Museum president. He says the event was created to give younger generations a "boots-on-the-ground" understanding of early farm life, offering experiences that textbooks simply can't replicate. According to Ingalls, the event was specifically designed to promote interest in farm life, "But we also didn't want to charge admission so that schools could bring students without worrying about funds for the trip."

Begun 26 years ago, the event has evolved into a major regional educational activity drawing thousands of students annually. Over the years, it has expanded its hands-on activities to keep early farm life engaging for new generations. Among the activities available for young people are candle dipping, tin punching, corn grinding and shelling, shaving wood, and cross-cut sawing. Students can also watch blacksmithing demonstrations and a sawmill and shingle mill in operation.

"These activities help participants understand the physical labor and craftsmanship that shaped rural communities," Ingalls says.

Ingalls adds that Farm History Day has hosted up to 2,300 kids plus staff on this special day each May. Visitors will be able to explore Olde Town – the museum's 1920s replica village with places like Pearl's Millinery Shop and Over The Hill Forge.

The Michigan Flywheelers Museum is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of antique gas engines, tractors, and early farm machinery. Located at 06285 68th Street, South Haven, it covers 83 acres and now has 22 buildings that were built on-site or moved in. The organization is run entirely by volunteers, including Ingalls. Their mission is to preserve and promote restoration of antique engines and tractors.

Farm History Day occurs on Friday, May 8, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The event is open to the public and offered free of charge to all schools and homeschooled groups.

For more information or to register a large school group, visit www.michiganflywheelers.org or email michiganflywheelers@yahoo.com.

# Rosie the Riveter visits Maritime Museum

***By James Windell***

Rosie the Riveter's image – popularized by the 1942 We Can Do It! poster – captured the spirit of determination, patriotism, and resilience that defined women during World War II.

Rosie the Riveter stands as a cultural icon representing the millions of American women who entered industrial and military-support roles during World War II. When men left for military service, women stepped into factories, shipyards, and aviation plants, proving their capability in skilled, technical, and physically demanding jobs.

The Michigan Maritime Museum is presenting Jeannette Gutierrez of the Michigan Rosies as she talks about women's important contribution to Allied Victory in World War II with a special focus on Michigan's maritime activities. The lecture, entitled "Rosie the Riveter and Beyond: How Women Helped Win WWII," will take place on Thursday, April 30, 2026 at the Michigan Maritime Museum.

Jeannette Gutierrez, a speaker, journalist and retired advertising professional, is executive director of the Michigan Rosies, a nonprofit organization dedicated to honoring the Rosies of WWII and preserving their legacy.

In a recent interview, Gutierrez said that in her talk she will focus on all of the ways that women helped win WWII.

"There were so many ways that women helped," she said. "They were war production workers, they replaced men in essential civilian jobs, they did volunteer work, and they were allowed to join the armed forces for the first time. There were also a lot of women who were national influencers who helped

the war effort by selling war bonds. But they all pitched in to help."

She also said that in her talk at the Museum she will delve into some of the ways in which Michigan's special geography and the waterways helped win the war. "Women worked in ship building companies in Michigan and they were important in the war effort by helping to bring ore and timber through the Soo Locks to the war production plants," she said.

Gutierrez was asked how she got involved in preserving the legacy of Rosies.

"I got involved years ago when I was worked in advertising," she explained. "As part of a campaign launch event for a client, some real WWII Rosie the Riveters were invited to be a part of it and they were all 89 or 90 years old then. I just fell in love with these women and I started to look into what was being done to preserve their history. Then, I got involved as a volunteer. But when I retired, it was became my work and my calling."

She founded Michigan Rosies, an organization, she said, whose focus is on education and on community engagement and preserving the legacy of these women from WWII.

She said it is important that the Rosies legacy be preserved. "First of all, WWII was the deadliest conflict in human history with over 30 nations involved and battles were fought on three continents," she said. "The world was mobilized for this conflict and women were mobilized to pitch in and win this war. It was a time of great community in our nation."

The work of the many Rosie's during the war, she said, should be remembered and harkened back to as we try to recapture that spirit. What the women did helped to change their place in our society.

"It opened doors for women and men and it opened doors for people of color," she said. "It caused people to rethink our society and rethink our definition of who's a patriotic American and who is able to do what jobs. Because women were needed for war work with men gone, they stepped up to do the work and they proved that we could do it."

"Rosie the Riveter and Beyond: How Women Helped Win WWII," is made possible thanks to the Nielsen-Wells Grant Fund and Mike and Sue Smith. The lecture will take place on Thursday, April 30, 2026 at the Michigan Maritime Museum, 260 Dyckman Avenue, South Haven. Tickets are free for Museum members and $10 for non-members. Doors open at 6:00 pm. For more information, visit the Museum's website at https: //michiganmaritimemuseum.org/events/

# Greater Hartford Area Chamber hosts After Hours

Greater Hartford Area Chamber of Commerce Hosts Successful After Hours Event at Hartford Pharmacy

The Greater Hartford Area Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce the success of its recent After Hours Event, held on April 23, 2026, at Hartford Pharmacy. The event brought together community members, business leaders, and local professionals for an evening of networking, conversation, and community engagement.

The Greater Hartford Area Chamber of Commerce invites anyone interested in learning more about its mission and activities to attend the next Chamber meeting on May 6, 2026, at 5:30 PM at the Hartford Public Library. Community members and prospective members are encouraged to join and discover how they can get involved.

For more information about the Greater Hartford Area Chamber of Commerce, please visit www.hartfordmichamber.org.

Pictured from left to right: Nancy Spoula (City of Hartford Council Member/Chamber Secretary/Owner of Rabbit Hole Comics), Bethany Kent (Hartford Pharmacy Technician), Rama Burramukku (Pharmacy Manager), Kevin Ferrell, PA-C (Lawrence Community Care), Birdie (Golden Retriever), Rachel Ferrell (Lawrence Community Care Practice Manager), Kaitlan Trine (Chamber President and owner of the Bake House), Jane Danger (City of Hartford Mayor/Chamber Trustee)

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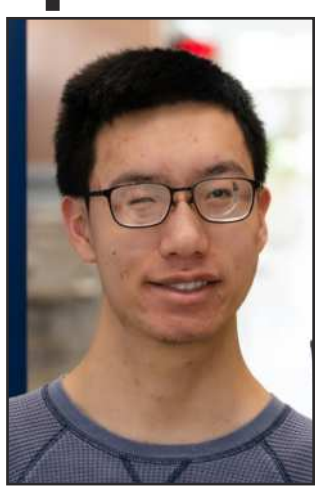
# 2ND FRONT PAGE

## Van Buren Tech students compete in BPA Michigan State Leadership Conference

**Santiago Ruiz**

**Logan Budfuloski**

**Isaac Nower**



**Colton Robinson**

Students from the Cyber Security & Computer Network Technology and Software Engineering programs at Van Buren Tech, Lawrence, competed in the Business Professionals of America (BPA) Michigan State Leadership Conference held at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids, Mich., alongside approximately 2,000 students from more than 100 high schools and career centers across Michigan.

The following students, placing first, second, or third, qualify to compete at the BPA National Leadership Conference in Nashville, Tenn.

Santiago Ruiz, Covert High School, Second Place, Server Administration Using Microsoft.

Logan Budfuloski, Mattawan High School, Third Place, Network Administration Using Cisco.

Isaac Nower, Lawrence High School, Third Place, Python Programming

Colton Robinson (Home School/Paw Paw High School), Third Place, Management, Marketing, and Human Resources Concepts.

Several Van Buren Tech students also placed in the Top 10 at the state level and represented their VB Tech programs well:

Kegan Born, Cassopolis Ross Beatty High School.

Jacob Kaczmarek, South Haven High School.

Moses Krause, Home School/Hartford High School.

Tyler Oliver, Bangor High School.

Mason Thurman, Hartford High School.

Aydan Unrath, Hartford High School.

Business Professionals of America is a Career and Technical Student Organization that prepares students for careers in business and information technology through leadership development and competitive events.

## Senior Services announces Path Forward

Diane Rigozzi

**By James Windell**

Speaking at a press conference at the South Haven Senior Services Center, Executive Director Diane Rigozzi noted how rapidly and extensively Senior Services of Van Buren County has grown.

"South Haven City activities increased from 7,259 in the years 2016 to 2019," she said, "but then in the three years after moving into our new building activities rose to about 202,000, with the number of members rising from 402 to 1,850."

Also speaking at the press conference was 38th District State Representative Joey Andrews, who serves on the Advisory Committee for Senior Services. He emphasized how community "focal points" like the South Haven Senior Services center improve access to services. Andrews praised Van Buren County Senior Services as a regional model and highlighted the importance of community connection in a time of increasing isolation.

South Haven's City Manager Kate Hosier in her remarks thanked Senior Services leadership, volunteers, and the Board. She noted the value of Senior Services goes beyond rides, meals, and equipment extending to fellowship and community. Hosier also shared that her own family benefited from receiving equipment and meals.

Senior Services Special Project Coordinator Linda Teeter was the featured speaker at the press conference. She told the audience that a community "Path Forward Committee" was formed to build on current momentum at Senior Services.

"The organization has a remaining mortgage balance of nearly $2 million, and the Path Forward Committee set a goal to retire the debt in two years," Teeter said.

She said that priorities for Senior Services and the Path Forward Committee are to create a plan to retire the balance due on the South Haven Senior Center and the Porter Senior Center building renovation projects. Also, she said that the committee's plan is to raise funds to remodel the South Haven's center's kitchen. The approximate cost for this remodeling project would be about $250,000. In addition, the committee will create a plan to raise funds for a new senior center serving Gobles, Bloomingdale and Grand Junction. Finally, Teeter announced that the committee will develop a plan to raise funds to expand the center serving Covert Township.

Teeter asked the attendees to support the campaign by hosting home gatherings, donating, and encouraging friends, family, neighbors and businesses to donate. The ask was positioned as a two-year focus to "adopt" Senior Services in charitable giving, aiming toward a future "mortgage-burning party." Teeter said that meals, activities, and programs will continue during the fundraising campaign.

"It was important to get our priorities straight as we look to the future," Rigozzi said after the meeting. "Our future fundraisers will be focused on the priorities laid out by Linda Teeter."

For instance, Rigozzi said at the April 27, 2026, press briefing that Senior Services has grown from 7 to 10 centers across the county and has now begun serving seniors in Casco Township in Allegan County. She pointed out that comparisons for the three years before moving into the current building in South Haven versus the three years after shows how much Senior Services has expanded.

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## Mattawan Lions Club to host Senior and Veterans Expo on May 4

MATTAWAN - The Mattawan Lions Club will host a Senior & Veterans Expo, on Monday, May 4, at the Antwerp Activity Center, 24821 Front Ave., Mattawan.

This highly anticipated community event will feature nearly 40 vendors offering valuable information, resources, and services tailored specifically for senior citizens and veterans.

Attendees will have the opportunity to connect with organizations providing support in areas such as:

•Healthcare services

•Veterans benefits and resources

•Community and senior programs

•And much more

"Last year's event was very well attended, and we are excited to build on that success with an even greater turnout this year," said Mattawan Lions Club member Karol Chopp.

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# County Commissioners approve placing ballot issues on Primary Ballot

PAW PAW - Van Buren County Commissioners on April 14, approved placing several ballot issues on the Aug. 4, Primary Ballot.

The Public Safety millage will expire with the 2026 levy.

The Public Safety Millage renewal proposal will allow Van Buren County to continue to levy 0.5332 mill, which was previously approved by the electors to fund drug enforcement and road patrol services. The Public Safety Millage will expire with the 2026 levy.

The proposal reads: "Shall Van Buren County levy 0.5332 mill ($0.5332 per thousand dollars of taxable value), for a period of four (4) years, 2027 to 2030, inclusive, for the exclusive purpose of providing funds for the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office for Drug Enforcement and Road Patrol?"

It is estimated that 0.5332 mill would raise approximately $2,380,982 when first levied in 2027.

The Ambulance Service millage renewal millage will expire with the 2026 levy.

This proposal will allow Van Buren County to levy 0.9353 mill, which was previously approved by the electors to fund ambulance services, but which will expire with the 2026 levy.

The proposal reads: "Shall Van Buren County levy 0.9353 mill (0.9353 per thousand dollars of taxable value), for a period of four (4) years, 2027 - 2030, inclusive, for the exclusive purpose of providing funds for ambulance services for the County?"

The previously authorized millage of 0.9370 mills will decrease by 0.0017 mills to equal a total of 0.9353 mills.

It is estimated that 0.9353 mill would raise approximately $4,184,390 when first levied in 2027.

The Van Buren Conservation District millage renewal proposal request to be place on the Aug. 4 primary ballot was also approved by commissioners.

The Conservation District millage expired in December 2025. Commmissioner approval to place a renewal millage for Van Buren Conservation District programs on the August 4, primary ballot was needed in order for it to be levied in December 2026.

If approved, it is estimated that the 0.0989 mill would raise approximately $442,463.54 when first levied in 2026.

Commissioners approved a Letter of Consistency for Alternative Fuel Technology, LLC, supporting EGLE authorization of a processing and transfer facility located at 875 N. Main St., Lawton.

# County to purchase Decatur farmland through MDARD grant

DECATUR - A total of 220 acres of farmland near Decatur will be kept for agricultural use in perpetuity now that Van Buren County has been awarded a $312,000 Agricultural Preservation Fund grant by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, according to a recent announcement from MDARD.

Van Buren County Community Services Director Lisa Ransler said the grant will be used to purchase the development rights to Druskovich Farms in Hamilton Township. According to Ransler, under this arrangement, the county will own the development rights to the property while the Druskovich family will retain ownership of the land, but with an easement keeping it as agricultural.

According to Ransler, if the land was on the market today, it would see a price of approximately $438,000, Ransler said the difference between the current value and the farming value is about $312,000.

According to Ransler, Druskovich committed a 30 percent match to the grant ($131,400).

Ransler said under the farmland preservation program, grant funding can cover up to 75 percent of the cost of purchasing development rights, with local governments and the landowner contributing the rest.

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development awarded more than $2 million in grants to protect farmland around the state, with Van Buren County named among the recipients.

MDARD recently announced the funding through the Agricultural Preservation Fund, which helps local governments purchase development rights and permanently preserve farmland. In total, about 744 acres across seven communities will be protected.

Van Buren County was the only recipient in Southwest Michigan.

Under the farmland preservation program, grant funding can cover up to 75 percent of the cost of purchasing development rights, with local governments and landowners contributing the rest. Once secured, those conservation easements ensure the land remains dedicated to agriculture for current and future owners.

MDARD Director Tim Boring said the program is designed to prevent farmland from being converted to other uses while supporting Michigan's agricultural economy.

# Benefit concert aids area food pantries

Jean Watson

Collection of non-perishable food items

PAW PAW - A benefit concert featuring recording artist Jean Watson was held Sunday, April 19, at the Paw Paw United Methodist Church. 420 W. Michigan Ave.

A total of $751 was collected as well as a large selection of non-perishable food items. The funds and food items were directed and divided between six area food pantries: The Porch and Eleanor's Pantry in Paw Paw; the Community Food Pantry, Lawrence; Decatur Human Services; the Gobles-Kendall Area Ministerial Association Food Pantry, and the Mattawan Area Pantry.

Watson, a singer, violinist, recording artist, author, and speaker from southwest Michigan, brought her music and message to more than 75 people who attended the concert. Since 2003, she has been inspiring audiences around the world through her words and music. She speaks and performs frequently in the United States and Ireland where she hosts a radio show on UCB Ireland. She is also a published author with Seedbed Publishers in Franklin, TN.

Watson recently returned from tours in Southern California and Ireland. She is getting ready to release her 13th full length album next month, produced by Nashville veteran, Jonathan Crone and featuring a guest performance by Russ Taff.

When she's not recording or traveling, Watson enjoys playing violin in the Kalamazoo Symphony, spending time with her family, and riding her horse, Juniper.

Watson said following the concert, "Thanks to all who came out to the fundraiser. I love seeing the community come together to bless those in need. We were so happy to be able to give food and a nice financial gift to local food banks."

The benefit concert was held as a fundraiser for Van Buren County area food pantries. It was recently announced that the Van Buren County CROP (Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty) Hunger Walk, held for more than 40 years, would not be continued this spring by the Van Buren County CROP Hunger Walk Committee.

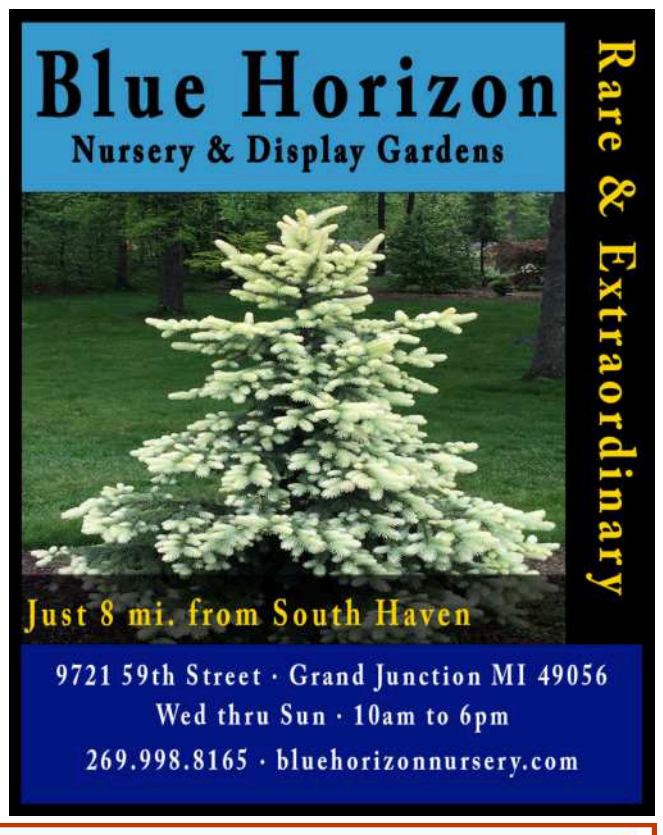
With separating from CROP, the committee is considering holding a future walk that will see all funds raised to be distributed to the six area food pantries.

# Candidate Forum May 2 in Paw Paw

Indivisible Paw Paw is hosting a candidate forum on Saturday, May 2 at 10 a.m. at the Paw Paw District Library. This event is open to the public.

The event will include candidates Kerry Tapper and Zachary Shinabarger vying for the 39th District House seat currently held by Pauline Wendzel. Rep. Wendzel was also invited but did not respond to email requests.

Questions will be presented to each candidate prepared by Indivisible Paw Paw Political Action Committee, and the audience also will have the opportunity to ask additional questions at the end.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# South Haven's Cadwell runs in Boston Marathon

***By James Windell***

The Boston Marathon, which is run every Patriot's Day, begins in Hopkinton, Massachusetts and ends on Boylston Street in downtown Boston, near the Boston Public Library.

Running in this year's Boston Marathon on April 20, 2026, South Haven native, Will Cadwell says the Boston Marathon is his favorite marathon.

"There is so much history to it," he said a couple of days after returning from Boston. "The crowds are incredible all along the whole route. You really feel like you are part of something special when you're doing it."

Cadwell says that the energy from the people all along the way is amazing. That helped him finish number 64, out of the more than 32,000 people who participated this year, with a time just over 2 hours and 18 minutes. The winner came in just 17 minutes before him.

"That was two minutes better than my time last year," says the accountant who graduated from South Haven High School.

Can he do better?

"That's what I get asked a lot," Cadwell says. "That's the hope, anyway, because you always strive to do better. I think I'm capable of more, but I guess we'll find out."

Since he's only 28, he says that he's aware that marathon runners tend to peak in their 30s. "A lot of them peak in their early to mid-thirties," he adds. "Maybe I still have a few years of improvement left in me."

Cadwell was a cross country athlete at South Haven High school, but he says he started running in middle school. "I always just enjoyed running and I liked challenging myself to do better," he says. "Since I always preferred the longer distances to the shorter distances, that drew me to marathons."

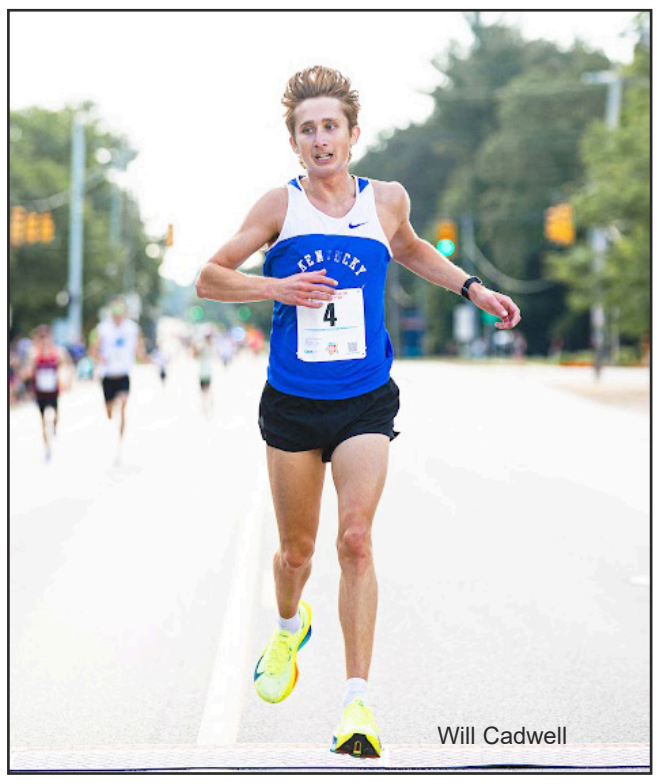
But he explains that it's the timing in races that he likes about competitive running. "I like setting goals and having tangible proof of improvement over time," he says. "That's a big motivator for me."

Not that he needs much motivation. He said that his year around schedule is to run about 10 miles every morning, rain or shine, winter or summer. All before he heads for work as an accountant in a West Michigan CPA group.

"I just run every day," he notes. "It's really pretty simple. If you want to get better at running, you've got to run – a lot. So, that what I do; I run a lot."

He started running in marathons about 10 years ago and won one marathon, the 2021 St. Jude Rock 'n' Roll Nashville Marathon where he finished in 2 hours, 26 minutes and 45 seconds. In 2024, he finished second in the Detroit Free Press Marathon with a time of 2:21:05.

He comments that he's finished second in many marathons. "It's kind of a running joke among my friends and family," he says. "When I'm going to run a marathon, they tell me I'll probably finish second. They like to keep me humble by reminding me that I'm not a champion marathoner. But it gives me a little more motivation to get out the door and run every day."


Will Cadwell

# Over 400 grams of meth seized at traffic stop

Four Kalamazoo residents are in custody after more than 400 grams of crystal methamphetamine were recovered during a traffic stop in Allegan County this past week.

On April 22, detectives with the Southwest Enforcement Team (SWET), in partnership with the Mid-Michigan Investigative Narcotics Team (MINT), conducted a narcotics trafficking investigation in Allegan and Kalamazoo Counties.

SWET is a multi-jurisdictional narcotics task force.

Deputies from the Allegan County Sheriff's Office (ACSO) made a traffic stop near US-131 and 116th Street in Martin Township.

Four suspects were in the vehicle when deputies conducted the stop, multiple of whom allegedly resisted arrest. Another suspect tried to destroy evidence by tearing packages open that contained suspected narcotics and throwing the contents into the air and on the road.

SWET said as a result of this, three deputies were exposed to potentially hazardous substances and were taken to a local hospital for evaluation.

One deputy was hurt after they were bitten by one of the suspects, and one suspect was taken to the hospital for treatment of a possible drug overdose.

According to SWET, everyone involved has been treated and released.

Investigators recovered more than 400 grams of crystal methamphetamine from the suspect vehicle.

The seizure led to the execution of a residential search warrant in the 900 block of Washington Street in Kalamazoo, where additional evidence of narcotics distribution was found.

Four Kalamazoo residents were arrested and face multiple charges, including:

- Resisting and obstructing police causing injury
- Resisting and obstructing police by attempting to destroy evidence
- Possession of methamphetamine with intent to deliver

"I am very proud of the excellent work being accomplished by the detectives with the Southwest Enforcement Team," said Allegan County Sheriff Frank Baker. "Our partnership helps to make our communities safer."

Residents are encouraged to report suspected drug activity to MSP-PROTECT@michigan.gov or leave an anonymous tip at (269) 982-8664.

If you or someone you know is seeking help for substance use, contact the Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health at 1-800-781-0353.

# OBITUARY

## ANDREW SCOTT ATKINS JOHNSON

Andrew Scott Atkins Johnson, 40, of Lakewood, Colorado, passed away unexpectedly in early January 2026.

Andy was born on November 26, 1985, in Paw Paw, Michigan. He grew up in both Paw Paw and Mattawan, Michigan, and graduated from Mattawan High School.

A beloved son, brother, nephew, father, cousin, uncle, and friend, Andy treasured spending time with his loved ones. His presence was warm and positive. He was known for caring deeply about his family and friends as well as for his smile, his laugh, and his humor. Those around him greatly appreciated Andrew's thoughtful and quick wit.

Andy liked to skateboard, snowboard, golf, and rock climb. He enjoyed attending sporting events, especially the Indianapolis 500, and greatly appreciated music. He treasured family vacations to Barothy Lodge and Big Moose Lake. He worked as a photographer, participated in medical mission work in Belize, and attended NASA Space Camp twice. Andy studied astronomy, math, and finance at Metropolitan State University, Denver; New Mexico State University-Alamogordo; San Diego Mesa College; and Kalamazoo Valley Community College.

Andrew is survived by his mother, Sue Johnson Phillippe, (stepfather Jim Phillippe); his father Fenimore William Johnson (stepmother Marcia Johnson); his brothers Fenimore Jeffrey Atkins Johnson, and William Thomas "Tom" Atkins Johnson (sister-in-law Jessica Johnson); his stepbrothers, Corey and James Phillippe and Jeff and Scott Getman; his niece, Jasmine Grosel; his biological daughter Alyssa Fredin, and many other loving family members and friends including Alex, Carol, and Dennis Fredin, Gordon Roscoe, the Norrises, the Johnsons, and the Birkes.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Warren and Janette Atkins, grandparents Fenimore and Vicki Johnson; his cousin and friend, Mike Norris; and numerous aunts and uncles.

Services will take place on May 16, 2026:

Interment Service: 10 am at Yorkville Cemetery, 1251 W. Gull Lake Dr., Richland, MI 49083

Church Service & Luncheon: 11 am at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, 9800 E B C Ave, Richland, MI 49083

Celebration of Life gathering: 4-6 pm at Paw Paw Brewing Company, 708 S. Gremps St, Paw Paw, MI 49079, live music 6-9 pm

Memorial contributions may be made to an organization of your choice. Flower arrangements may be ordered through Farley Estes Dowdle Funeral Home & Cremation Care, Richland Chapel. Personal memories of Andy or personal messages for Andy's family may be placed at www.farleyestesdowdle.com.

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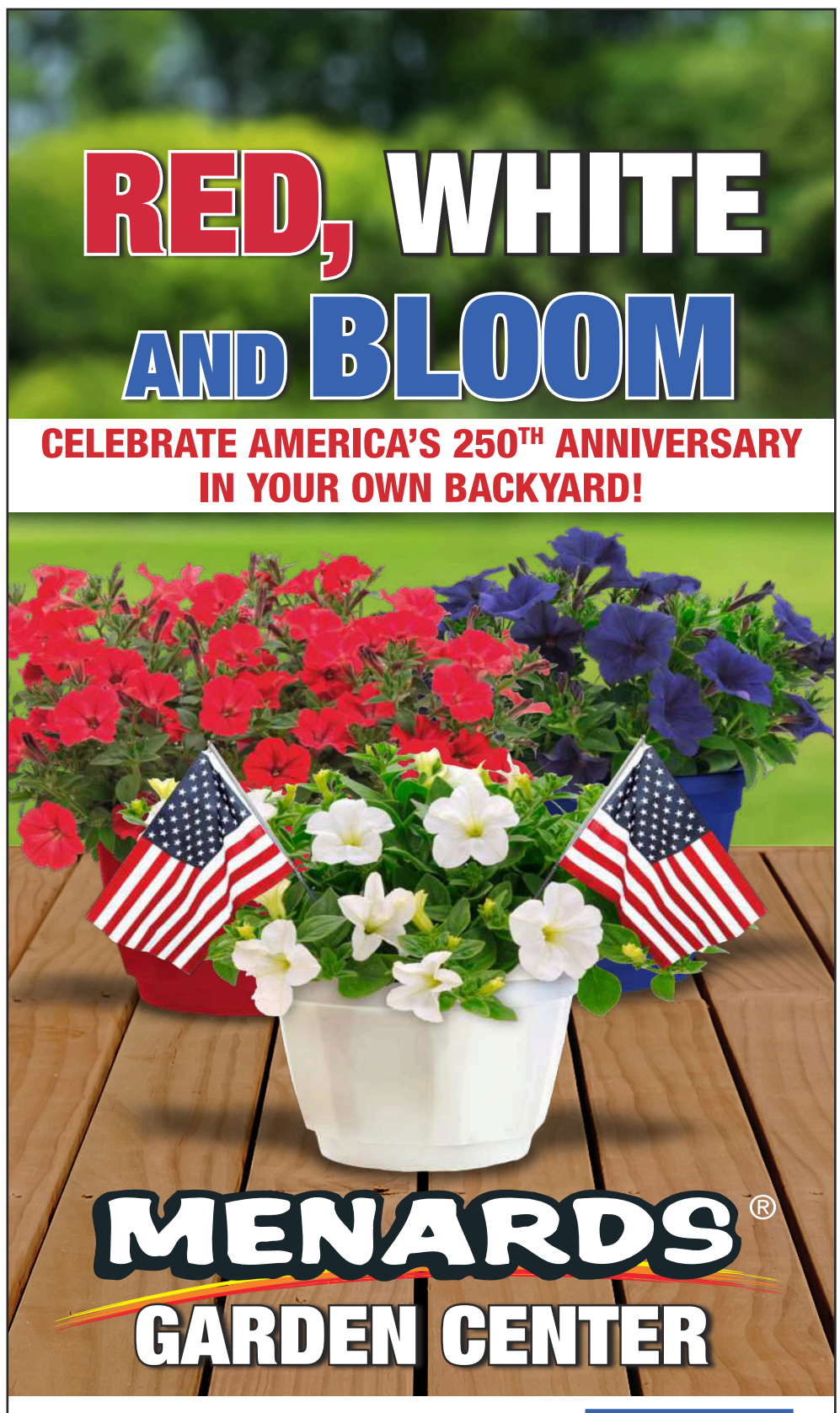
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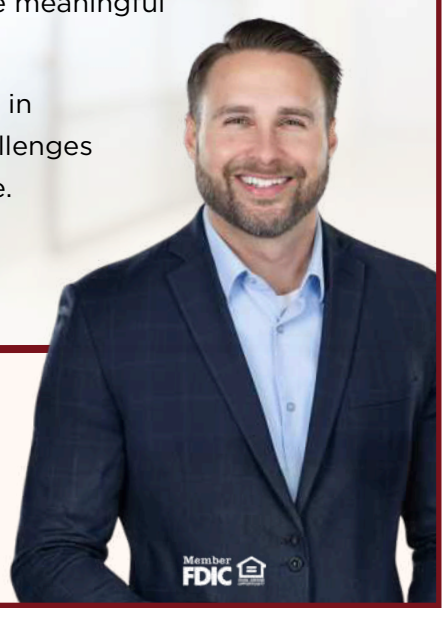
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# VIEWPOINT

## Let's keep data centers in industrial areas

MIKE'S MUSINGS

MIKE WILCOX
n PUBLISHER n

If solar panels and windmills weren't enough, the newest intrusion to our lands and quality of life is the need to grow the number of data centers in America and Michigan exponentially. And that has created a frenzy among the general public who is resisting the location of a data center near them.

It has become a hot topic at township meetings pitting board members who see the need and homeowners that demand the data center be built elsewhere. So hot that board members have resigned and residents are demanding recall in some areas.

Data centers are the quiet backbone of modern life. Every email sent, movie streamed, bank transaction processed, or GPS route calculated depends on vast networks of servers humming away somewhere out of sight. Without them, the digital economy simply doesn't function. Now that AI has many everyday uses the need for more data centers is critical. The question isn't whether we need data centers—we absolutely do. The real question is where they belong.

Too often, the answer has been "wherever land is available," including near or within residential neighborhoods. That's a mistake. While data centers may not look like traditional heavy industry, they share many of the same characteristics: constant energy demand, significant heat output, large physical footprints, and the need for round-the-clock operation. Those traits make them far better suited for industrial zones than residential ones.

For residents, the downsides are real. Data centers rely on massive cooling systems, which generate persistent noise—sometimes a low hum, sometimes a mechanical whir—that doesn't stop at night. Backup generators, tested regularly, add another layer of disruption. Increased traffic during construction and maintenance phases can strain local roads never designed for that kind of use. And while these facilities are generally safe, their sheer scale and infrastructure needs can alter the character of a neighborhood in ways homeowners didn't sign up for.

Industrial areas, on the other hand, are designed for exactly this kind of activity. They already accommodate higher energy use, heavier infrastructure, and 24/7 operations. Power grids in these zones are often more robust, reducing strain on residential supply. Noise expectations are different, and the surrounding land use is compatible with large, utilitarian buildings that prioritize function over aesthetics.

There's also a planning advantage. Concentrating data centers in industrial zones allows municipalities to better manage infrastructure upgrades, from electrical substations to fiber connectivity. It creates opportunities to cluster related industries, improve efficiency, and even plan for shared cooling or energy solutions. Trying to retrofit residential areas for these needs is not only inefficient it's avoidable.

None of this is an argument against technological growth. In fact, it's the opposite. If communities want to support the expansion of cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and digital services, they need to place the infrastructure wisely. Poor siting decisions can spark backlash, slow development, and create unnecessary conflict between residents and developers.

Data centers are essential. But essential doesn't mean they belong everywhere. Like factories, warehouses, and logistics hubs, they should be located where their impact is expected, managed, and appropriate. Industrial zones aren't just an option—they're the right fit for a technology that powers our lives but doesn't need to live next door.

# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Reader offended by anti-American activities of left

Dear Editor,

This has been a week of retrospect. Last Sunday was the 250th anniversary of the Battles of Lexington and Concord. Who fired the first shot at Lexington is debatable and inconsequential, what is significant is that this is considered to have been the beginning of our armed struggle for independence from British rule. The impetus for this event was when the British demanded the American residents surrender all arms. These two battles were the American patriot's version of telling the British to pound sand. Roughly three months later our Declaration of Independence was adopted to initiate our American Revolution. Fifty-six men, relying on divine Providence, pledged their lives, fortunes and honor in support of this declaration.

Then yesterday we attended the annual Gold Star Family Banquet, hosted by our very own Decatur VFW post. The event is not only a fundraiser to support this most worthy organization but also provides an opportunity for us to honor these families whose loved ones made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our nation's liberty. A Gold Star Family has experienced the loss of an immediate family member who died as a result of active-duty military service. Gold Star Families continue to serve our nation by assisting our military veterans in a variety of endeavors through our VA Hospitals as well as other supportive activities.

The nearly limitless reminders of America's exceptionalism surround us. Which is probably why those of us that appreciate and are truly humbled by our remarkable Republic are so offended and bewildered by the clueless, anti-American activities of the left.

Last night another new democrat failed in attempting to assassinate President Trump. I believe since July 2024 this is the fifth hard assassination attempt against President Trump. Of course, the radical snowflakes will blame the "bombastic Trump" for creating this violent atmosphere. So, in their embryonic minds he gets what he deserves. While the remainder of us in the adult world realize that our parents were quite correct when they taught us that "sticks and stones can break our bones but words can never hurt us".

Fact is if we were justified in dropping the hammer on someone every time we're offended our would never suffer from over population. Not to mention that only authoritarians and the simple-minded require everyone to agree with them. No, last night was one more example of the American education system and mainstream media's indoctrination and misinformation campaign against our nation. Another generation of soft, entitled yet ignorant Americans that know nothing of their nation's or our world's history. Another generation that truly believes that even with their total lack of knowledge and life experience they somehow have all the answers.

Theodore Roosevelt nailed it when he said "To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society." In their arrogance, the left fails to realize that the America they are striving to create is the country our founding fathers fought to escape. Or perhaps they do realize it and the communists have succeeded in high jacking the democratic party.

I'm certain that we will shortly see reports from mainstream media that this assassination attempt, like all the others, was staged by the Trump Whitehouse. Along with other conspiratorial reports such as 9/11 was a joint U.S-Israel assault and the U.S. moon landing was filmed on a Hollywood soundstage.

When legislators justify such traitorous behavior, it is time to require those elected and appointed bureaucrats that cannot pledge allegiance to our U.S. Constitution and founding principles as well as fulfill their oaths of office, should be immediately removed from office. This includes federal, state and local officials as well as judges. The new democrats will never comprehend this concept as they continually demonstrate they have no honor, and their fundamental principle requires that in order to create and maintain their power it's acceptable to lie and cheat. From the Democratic Socialists refusing to pass the SAVE Act or fund our national security to insisting that foreign terrorists and criminals should not be prosecuted for crimes against American citizens, they are destroying our nation a little more every day.

"Thomas Sowell said "One of the most important reasons for studying history is that virtually every stupid idea that is in vogue today has been tried before and proved disastrous before, time and again."

John R. Young

## Why "Medicare For All" Makes Sense

Dear Editor:

A while ago, I saw a news story about a member of Congress holding a townhall meeting and being asked about his position on a government-managed, universal healthcare system, sometimes referred to as "Medicare For All". He immediately replied, "We can't afford it." That reply is completely untrue. In fact, such a system would greatly reduce the amount of money America spends on healthcare. Here are the facts.

To begin, the United States is the only wealthy country that does not guarantee health coverage to all residents, whether through a single-payer system or a tightly regulated multi-payer system. (We are also the only country that allows healthcare expenses to bankrupt people.) These universal healthcare systems also control costs much more effectively than is done in the U.S. Data from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)* show that, in 2024, healthcare spending in the U.S. was about $14,880/person compared to about $9,000-$10,000/person in Switzerland, the country with the second highest per person spending. The average spending on healthcare in the 38 OECD countries was about $6,000/person, less than half of the U.S. amount.

Because America spends more per person on healthcare, it would be natural to think that the health outcomes in America would be better. Unfortunately, that is not the case. This chart compares 4 measures of healthcare outcomes for the U.S. and the OECD countries:

U.S. OECD avg.

Life expectancy, in years 78.4 81.1

Preventable & Treatable Deaths per 100,000 people 312 222

Maternal mortality; deaths per 100,000 births 22-23 3-10

Infant mortality; deaths per 1,000 live births 5.6 4.0

Plainly, the more expensive U.S. healthcare system provides poorer results for Americans. Why is this so?

The primary reason is the U.S. system has far higher administrative costs, not treatment costs. TIME magazine reports that, in the U.S., a total of $2,000-$2,500/person goes to administration every year compared to $500-$1,000/person in the OECD countries. Healthcare providers (doctors, hospitals, etc.) must have staff to deal with the complexity of multiple insurers and multiple plans with different billing rules. Insurers incur costs for advertising and for staff to deal with prior authorizations, billing disputes, and underwriting, while generating enough revenue to provide profits for investors. For private insurers, annual administrative spending is about $800-$1,200/person. Our government-administered Medicare program is much simpler, resulting in the comparable annual spending amount being only about $150-$300/person.

The experience of every other developed country shows that a universal healthcare system can reduce costs and improve health outcomes. However, there is no one system that works everywhere. Each country designs a system that works for them. As a Medicare participant, I pay part of the cost of my government-administered coverage plus the cost of a policy from a private insurer that supplements my Medicare coverage. This system seems to work well. I've never had a dispute regarding coverage nor have I been denied coverage.

Clearly, the amounts paid to providers under a universal healthcare system would have to increase beyond what Medicare currently pays and the costs would have to be distributed in a way that is affordable for everyone. But, we can improve the lives of every person in the United States and reduce the overall costs for healthcare by simplifying our system to focus our dollars on prevention and treatment, rather than on administration and profit.

We must not let elected representatives continue to get away with simply dismissing the idea of universal healthcare with a wave of a hand and "We can't afford it." Not only can we afford it, we can save money and improve the health of all Americans in the process. This is a win-win for everyone (except the health insurance companies): lower costs and better results. Remember this as the elections approach and vote for candidates that support universal healthcare.

Tim Martin – Decatur Township

P.S. Release the Epstein files. The DOJ has violated the law for more than 4 months.

* OECD is an international organization of 38 developed countries that publishes economic surveys, data analysis, and peer reviews, providing recommendations to governments to improve the economic and social well-being of people worldwide.

Tim Martin
Decatur

# Sheriff's Report- Administrative staff thanked

"This past Wednesday was Administrative Professionals Day. I'd like to give a shout out to ours here at the office. They are good at what they do, very professional, and always leave a positive experience with those in the public who has had contact with them at our office," said Van Buren County Sheriff Daniel Abbott.

Sgt. Weers assisted Michigan State Police on a domestic assault in Hartford Township. "The suspect fled on foot and was reported to be armed. Sgt. Weers put the drone up with the night vision activated and located the suspect prone out in a thick covered area. He was able to guide troopers to the area, and they gave commands to the suspect. He did obey the commands and walked out to the troopers, to which he was placed under arrest. Great teamwork once again," said Sheriff Abbott.

Deputies handled a be on the lookout (BOL) for a vehicle at a business in Almena Township that almost went over a retaining wall. Deputies located the vehicle in question, and while investigating the incident, the driver tried to leave. "Deputies were able to detain her so she couldn't and continue to investigate the situation. It was found she was intoxicated and had her three children in the car. She was lodged for the incident and now faces several charges. The children were turned over to (TOT) a grandparent. A huge shout out to the caller on this, you may have saved not only the childrens' lives, but others as well," said Sheriff Abbott.

"Our Victim Service Unit attended the Michigan Sheriff's Association 2026 Victim Advocate State Conference in Lansing this week. At the conference, there are a lot of topics that are covered to help them with their jobs here being an advocate. We are blessed in our county to have all the individuals who are part of our team here. They donate their time, assist numerous people and professionals throughout the year to help with different calls that take place. I personally cannot thank them enough for everything they do not only for the office, but for our community," said Sheriff Abbott.

"Just a reminder that "Road Closed" means just that. We consistently see drivers ignoring the signs, going around the barricades, etc. Keep in mind that you can be cited for driving through a closed road area. Deputies consistently hear when they stop vehicles for the violation "I do it all the time" or "I didn't think it was that big of deal." Our office works at times with the Van Buren County Road Commission to cite drivers for driving through a road closed area so keep that in mind. Also, it's not right drivers putting the VBCRC workers in danger," said Sheriff Abbott.

"Our Microchip event was a huge success at Animal Control. A total of 57 dogs were microchipped during the event. Thank yous go out to everyone who participated to make this happen and who were able to work it. Speaking of Animal Control, our Director Magen Spiece was asked to judge the photo contest held by VBDL in Lawrence. The theme was 'Pets and Animals.' She had a great time doing it and was honored to be asked to participate. Lastly, Animal Control was able to transfer 13 dogs to the Little Traverse Bay Humane Society. We are very grateful for all the partnerships across the state to help find dogs like these their forever homes," said Sheriff Abbott.

Deputies handled a single car crash on Interstate 94 highway, near the 63mm in Antwerp Township. "The driver lost control and went into several cable barriers. Deputies found that the driver had been drinking, hence, causing the crash. The driver was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol with a high alcohol content," said Sheriff Abbott.

Deputies responded to a larceny in progress in Columbia Township. "The property owner found two people stealing items from his property, so he blocked in their vehicle until deputies could arrive," said Sheriff Abbott. Deputies arrested one of the suspects for larceny and trespassing.

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# $800,000 secured to replace structurally deficient bridge in Antwerp Township

State Rep. Pauline Wendzel announced Wednesday, April 22, she has secured $800,000 in the House budget for the total replacement of the structurally deficient bridge carrying County Road 657 over the East Branch of the Paw Paw River in Antwerp Township.

The bridge, located between 60th Avenue and 62nd Avenue, supports approximately 3,600 vehicles daily, including emergency vehicles, heavy agricultural transport, and local school buses. Following a routine inspection last year that revealed advanced deck deterioration, the Van Buren County Road Commission placed the structure under a 31-ton weight restriction. Without replacement, a full closure would force a six-mile detour for emergency vehicles, school buses, and the thousands of residents and farmers who depend on this route daily.

"The Van Buren County Road Commission came to me with a problem that wasn't going to fix itself," Rep. Wendzel said. "A failing bridge on a road that carries thousands of people every day. Farmers hauling crops, school buses full of kids, ambulances racing to calls, families just trying to get home. That's not a bridge you let fail. I took this fight to Lansing and secured the funding to replace it. The people of Antwerp Township depend on this bridge, and now they'll have one that's built to serve them for decades to come."

The current structure measures 19.5 feet, a half-foot short of the 20-foot minimum required to qualify for the Local Bridge Fund. That technicality has left the bridge ineligible for standard state and federal maintenance funding for its entire lifespan. The replacement structure will measure 21 feet, bringing it into the existing funding framework and eliminating the need for future special legislative appropriations.

"This funding is a gamechanger for Van Buren County," said Bret Witkowski, Managing Director of the Van Buren County Road Commission. "The current bridge has been an unexpected challenge for our budget, and closing it was never a viable option given the traffic volume and the impact on emergency response. Representative Wendzel went to bat for our community, and this investment will serve Van Buren County residents for decades to come."

Formal letters of support for the bridge replacement were submitted by the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, Sheriff Daniel Abbott, the Lawton Fire Department, Van Buren Emergecny Medical Services (VBEMS), the Village of Mattawan, and the Van Buren Intermediate School District, reflecting the bridge's role in emergency response, student transportation, and the movement of agricultural goods across the county.

The funding was secured through the Legislative Directed Spending Initiative (LDSI) and is included in the House budget. The legislation now advances through the appropriations process.

# Van Buren Tech celebrates 50 years

LAWRENCE - On May 27, Van Buren Tech will mark a significant milestone: 50 years of providing high-quality Career and Technical Education (CTE) opportunities for students across Van Buren County.

To commemorate this anniversary, Van Buren Tech will host a 50-Year Celebration Open House on Wednesday, May 27, from 4 to 7 p.m. at 250 South St., Lawrence. The event is open to former and current students, alumni, current and former staff, and community members interested in exploring the evolution and continued impact of Career and Technical Education in the region.

Guests will have the opportunity to tour the facility, visit program showcases, and view student work highlighting the wide range of hands-on learning experiences offered at Van Buren Tech.

The open house will also provide alumni and community members with a chance to reconnect with classmates, instructors, and staff while seeing firsthand how programs have expanded and evolved over time.

A variety of food trucks will be available on-site for purchase, including Kurbside Food Truck, The Mobile Crave, Pig's Head BBQ, and Sweet Stacks & Sodas Locas, contributing to a festive, community-centered celebration.

A special Staff Legacy Recognition Hour will take place from 6 to 7 p.m., honoring the educators and staff who have shaped the success of Van Buren Tech over the past five decades.

This portion of the event is reserved for current and former staff and their guests and will include a formal recognition of the school's 50-year legacy, opportunities to share memories, and a dessert reception.

Originally established as the Skills Center and later known as the Vo-Tech and Technology Center, Van Buren Tech has a long-standing history of preparing students for success beyond high school. Today, the institution offers 25 career and technical education programs that provide students with hands-on learning, industry-recognized credentials, and opportunities for college credit through partnerships with colleges, universities, and local industry partners.

Those interested in attending are encouraged to RSVP at www.vbisd.org.

# Old restaurant with a new name in South Haven

***By James Windell***

The handwriting on the blackboard in the lobby of the Chalkboard Ktchen has one message: "What are you doing to change it up?"

That message is not for customers so much as it is intended for staff.

Change it up is what the new owners of the restaurant are telling the staff to internalize as a guiding behavior. It's an instruction that's supposed to shape how the team thinks and acts during service. It's about rebranding.

While you may not be familiar with the name Chalkboard Kitchen, it is a restaurant that has a history as a favorite eating spot for residents and tourists.

The restaurant began in 2001 as Phoenix Street Café on Phoenix Street and, after more than two decades as a local favorite, relocated in 2023 to Broadway Street with a new name –Phoenix Street on Broadway.

Rebranded again, this time as Chalkboard Kitchen, the restaurant has new owners and a new lease on life.

When Jay Marcoux recently decided to move away from running Phoneix on Broadway, his twin brother, Chad Marcoux, and Chef Allen Worman said they wanted to take it over.

Renaming it Chalkboard Kitchen, Chad Marcoux and Chef Allen wanted a new name to reflect the personal touch the two would bring to the restaurant. Besides the name change, the two have emphasized a new mindset for the staff: Change it up.

"Our tagline is Change it up," Marcoux said in a recent interview in the restaurant on a Thursday morning. "We want it to be more alive with kind and friendly staff. We want an atmosphere so that when guests come in here they will leave with a good feeling about their experience."

Why the name Chalkboard Kitchen?

Chad uses the analogy of a teacher to explain the new name. "It's like a teacher. You learn the lesson and the teacher erases the board and you go on to something new on the chalkboard," Marcoux explains. "We will have a changing, evolving menu."

"Having a rotating dinner menu, " he said, "is an example of changing it up."

When Chef Allen Worman joined the conversation, he said he has been trying to sell Chad and the staff on the idea that it will be casual and fine dining, but the specials will change.

Marcoux and Worman noted that when they had barbecue a couple of weeks ago, it went over so well they will do more barbecue specials in the future. "There's no other barbecue place in town, so here we are and we will be doing more of smoked meats," Marcoux said.

Both partners said that Chef Allen will also offer some of his specialty items, such as Italian food and salmon.

Both partners have been in the restaurant business for decades. Besdes being the chef at Phoenix Street Café and Phoenix on Broadway, Chef Allen has been chef at other restaurants. Chad Marcoux, who followed his family to South Haven more than 25 years ago, has been a manager at Café Julia, Phoenix Street Café and Phoenix on Broadway.

Chalkboard Kitchen, located at 259 Broadway, South Haven, will be open seven days a week beginning at 7:00 am until 2:00 pm for breakfast and lunch. They will be serving dinner on Fridays and Saturdays from 5:00 to 9:00 pm. It is recommended that you check their postings on Facebook and Instagram for the weekly dinner specials.

# Area Church Services

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27503 CR 375
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668-2811
www.almenaumc.com
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FRIDAY: AA- 8 p.m.

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**COVEY HILL BAPTIST CHURCH**
33566 28th Avenue
(corner of 28th & M-40)
269-628-2139
www.coveyhill.org
Pastor Daniel Wilson
SUNDAY Worship 10:45am
Nursery & Children's Church provided
Messages available on YouTube

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**FAITH OF THE APOSTLES CURCH**
34580 M-40 Highway
Elder David Harn
1 (269) 512-4586
SUNDAY
Christian Education - 10 a.m.
Wroship Service - 11:30 a.m.
WEDNESDAY • Bible Study - 7 p.m.

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**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**
32464 Red Arrow
Pastor Horace M. "Buddy" Turner... 657-2090
SUNDAY Worship - 11 a.m.
on Facebook: www.Facebook.com/buddyturner2 or search: "Buddy Turner"

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**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
120 Pine St, Paw Paw
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SUNDAY Morning Worship - 10 a.m.

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**PAW PAW UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**
420 W. Michigan Ave., Paw Paw, MI 49079
269-657-7727
Pastor Dan Phillips
Sunday Service at 9:30 am

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School: 657-5921
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www.truthchurchpawpaw.com
Pastor Steven Green
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School - 10 a.m.
Evening Service - 6 p.m.
THURSDAY Bible Study - 7 p.m.

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(269) 377-6514
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northpointgobles@gmail.com
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Monday: 7 pm - REFRESH Bible Study
Wednesday: 7pm - Prayer Meeting

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**ST JUDE' MISSION PARISH**
13809 M-40
269-628-2219
Thursday – 10:00 AM
Sunday – 9:00 AM

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**GOBLES UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**
210 E. Exchange St., Gobles
(269) 628-2263
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Sunday: 9:30 a.m. Worship
Children's Sunday School
Website: goblesumc.com
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**DECATUR NEW HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH**
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Pastor Ross Tarantino
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TUESDAY
Bible Study-1:00 p.m.
269-423-8136
info@decaturnewhopecommu-nity.net

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117 S.Franklin Street
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Pastor Adam Potgiesser
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www.nc2online.com • face-book.com/nc2online
(269) 299-2003

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**ST. PAUL'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**
624-1050
Pastor Ashlei Horn
SUNDAY Worship - 10:00 a.m.
www.stpoulsumclawton.com or on Facebook www.Facebook.com/Lawton-St-Pauls-UMC

**MATTAWAN**

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7829 S. 5th St
Pastor Gregory VanHeukelom
375-6240
www.calvaryreformed.org
Website: https://www.calva-ry-community.church/
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(In person and on Facebook)

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**MATTAWAN COMMUNITY CHURCH**
23680 Front Ave.
668-3263
www.mattawancc.com
mattawancommunitychurch@gmail.com
Pastor Eric Baird
Sundays at 10:25 a.m

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**ST. JOHN BOSCO CATHOLIC CHURCH**
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Rev. John Tran
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www.stjbparish.com
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# Gilmore Piano Festival Artist Elliot Wuu to present premiere performance in South Haven

Gilmore Piano Festival Artist Elliot Wuu to Present Premiere Performance in South Haven on May 9

SOUTH HAVEN – Continuing a tradition of presenting outstanding Gilmore Piano Festival artists, the South Haven Performance Series will begin its 2026 Series with a concert by award-winning pianist Elliot Wuu on Saturday, May 9.

*Elliot Wuu*

The concert will be hosted by Peace Lutheran Church, 06321 Blue Star Memorial Highway in South Haven beginning at 7 p.m.

"Our Performance Series has been privileged to be chosen by the Gilmore Festival as a site to feature their prestigious artists," said South Haven Performance Series President Bob Linstrom. "Our goal as a Series is to bring exemplary live classical style music to the South Haven community and I can't think of a better way to launch the 2026 season."

Pierre van der Westhuizen, Executive and Artistic Director with the Gilmore, shares Linstrom's enthusiasm. "We are thrilled to collaborate with the South Haven Performance Series to present Gilmore Young Artist Elliot Wuu as part of the 2026 Gilmore International Piano Festival," van der Westhuizen stated. "Elliot represents the extraordinary artistry and promise that defines the future of classical piano, and this partnership allows us to share that brilliance with even more communities. Opportunities like this deepen our mission to celebrate and support young artists while expanding the reach of the Festival. We are deeply grateful to everyone involved in making this concert possible in South Haven."

Praised for his "power, speed, and finesse of artists twice his age" (Tribune Star), Young Steinway Artist Elliot Wuu captivates audiences with his vibrant tone and emotional depth. Named a 2018 Gilmore Young Artist, Elliot has garnered top prizes in international competitions, including the Hilton Head International Piano Competition and the Yamaha and Bösendorfer USASU International Piano Competition. Most recently, he is a laureate of the 2025 American Pianists Awards.

Elliot has performed in major venues across the US, France, Italy, Germany, the UK, Poland, Romania, and China. His notable appearances include performances at Carnegie Hall, the United Nations Headquarters, WQXR's Greene Space in New York, and Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris. Other notable concert performances include appearances at the Gilmore International Keyboard Festival, Aspen Festival, Ravinia Festival, La Jolla SummerFest, and many others. Additionally, he has been featured on WQXR's Young Artists Showcase, Performance Today and NPR's From the Top.

Born in Fremont, California, Elliot attended the San Francisco Conservatory Pre-College in high school. He went on to earn both his Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from The Juilliard School, where he studied with Robert McDonald as a recipient of the Kovner Fellowship. Elliot released his debut album with the Steinway and Sons label in the fall of 2025.

Founded in 2010, the South Haven Performance Series is an all-volunteer community-based organization committed to providing a rich mixture of musical arts for area residents and visitors. Most concerts are held during the spring and summer months with an additional holiday concert presented in December.

Performances are provided thanks to the generous support of the South Haven Community Foundation, corporate sponsors, and individual donors. A modest $15 admission fee is charged for the spring and summer concerts while the holiday concert is presented free of charge as a gift to the community. Students are always admitted free. Tickets are sold on the evening of the concert.

# South Haven High School graduate making her mark in chamber music

***By James Windell***

Abigail Grabner, a 2023 graduate of South Haven High School, is a music education major with a string emphasis at Western Michigan University's Gilmore School of Music.

Earlier this month, Grabner's string quartet, in which she plays viola, performed as part of the Fontana Chamber Music Series in Kalamazoo.

To be selected to perform as part of the prestigious Fontana Chamber Series, Grabner's quartet had to enter a competition with other chamber groups on campus.

In a phone interview, she talked about that competition and about finding herself at Western Michigan University where she is a junior.

She said that the quartet that was chosen to play in the Fontana Chamber Series is made up of two violinists, a bassist, and herself on viola. "It's a really interesting quartet," she said, "because there's not a lot of music written for two violins, viola and bass. But we really wanted to make it work because we're all really good friends and we have really pushed each other to do our best."

After playing together for only about six months, they entered a chamber music competition at Western Michigan University. "Every year Western has a chamber competition where different groups from each area, such as strings, brass, and winds, come together and perform in front of the entire School of Music," she explained. "They choose a handful of the performers and those are the winners of the competition and they play in the Fontana Chamber Music series."

The music the quartet played was a Michael Haydn piece. "It was really interesting because there are barely any recordings of it, so it was really difficult piecing it together because we were not entirely sure what it should sound like. Also, because it was by Joseph Haydn's less famous younger brother."

Grabner began playing the viola at age 11. Although she doesn't come from a musical family, she says that she was always drawn to music. "From a very young age, I asked for a musical instrument," she says. "As soon as I was old enough, I joined the school orchestra."

She never took private lessons and everything she learned about playing the viola was learned at school. An important figure in her life was Jessica Fiedorowicz, who was her orchestra director from age 12, and who she says was a "constant for me."

"Mrs. Fiedorowicz was really, really supportive and pushed me to do my best," she says. "When I was growing up, music was a really big outlet for me and her classroom became my safe space. I knew she was someone I could trust." And Fiedorowicz recommended that she major in music in college.

"When I went to her and I told her I actually wanted to keep playing music for the rest of my life," Grabner says, "she started helping me choose a repertoire for auditions for college."

Besides her viola classes and her quartet, Grabner is part of the founding board for a new campus initiative – the Campus String Orchestra. Starting next fall, the Campus Orchestra will be run by music education majors and have an open invitation to all students interested in continuing to play in an orchestra while pursuing other career paths and majors.

"People noticed that there is only one orchestra at Western and it is incredibly hard to get into it," she says, "and that's especially true if you are not a music major. I could see that there are many students at Western who have an interest in playing in an orchestra. We thought we could develop an orchestra for those people and give them a place to play music and offer them more string experience before they go off in another direction. I am really very excited to be a part of this."

Although she says that being a music major at WMU has been difficult, she has overcome some of the barriers for her – such as not having a background in private viola lessons and not playing in youth orchestras. "Despite entering college as sort of an odd duck and feeling alienated initially, as the years have gone on, I've grown a lot and I've caught up," she says. "Now I feel like I really belong. I've made a lot of friends here and they are such wonderful people."

*Abigail Grabner*

Grabner is not sure what she will do when she graduates next year. "I know I will graduate and have a rectal at that time," she says. "After that, I have to decide if I want to go to grad school or if I will be heading straight into the work force. Either way, I will be incredibly excited and passionate about whatever choice I make."

# Seven South Haven beaches ready for beach-goers

***By Tom Renner***

South Haven crews have been busy in recent days grooming the beaches that will soon again be filled with sun-bathers and swimmers. The city maintains seven public beaches.

# National Day of Prayer being observed in South Haven

***By James Windell***

Perhaps at no time since the National Day of Prayer was established by act of Congress and signed into law by President Harry Truman in 1952 has our country been more in need of prayer.

According to John Lohrstorfer, a deacon at St. Basil Parish in South Haven, "The National Day of Prayer has deep roots in the history of the formation of our nation. During the revolutionary war, the Continental Congress issued a proclamation for fasting and prayer."

Later, Lohrstorfer explains, George Washington in 1779 declared a National Day of Prayer and fasting.

The National Day of Prayer takes place every first Thursday in May and this year the event will occur on May 7, 2026. Hosted by the South Haven Area Ministerial Alliance, a collective of churches and pastors in the South Haven area who are committed to working together for the betterment and support of our shared community, the day will be commemorated at noon on the lawn of City Hall.

As an annual observance in the U.S., Americans are encouraged to "turn to God in prayer and meditation." It is, in effect, a nationwide day set aside for people of all faith traditions to pray individually or in groups – at homes, houses of worship, public gatherings, or community events. It is not tied to any single religion, and participation is voluntary

"In South Haven, this observance has been going on for many years," says Lohrstorfer, "and this year we have representatives from the community who will offer prayers for our government, businesses and economy, for our police and law enforcement, for our education, for family and marriages, and for a continued spiritual renewal."

Lohrstorfer says that each year has a theme established by the National Day of Prayer Task Force.

This year, the 75th anniversary of the National Day of Prayer, the theme is drawn from 1 Chronicles 16:24: "Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples."

The National Day of Prayer Task Force explains that the theme is intended to unite prayer gatherings nationwide and encourage believers to rededicate themselves and the nation to God.

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## Bangor soccer loses 1-0

Bangor's soccer girls continue their winning ways.

**By John Raffel**
Correspondent

BANGOR — The Bangor Vikings traveled to Lawton for a tough matchup and put in a strong effort but came up just short in a 1–0 loss.

Goalkeeper Solexey Calderon delivered an outstanding performance in net, recording 10 saves and keeping the Vikings in the game against a persistent Lawton attack.

"Despite the result, the team continues to show improvement with each match," coach Antonio Robles said.

Last week Monday the Lady Vikings traveled to Comstock for another conference match and came away with a 3–0 victory over the Colts.

Isabella Macedo led the attack with two goals, while Samantha Ogrodny added another to secure the win. Both Ogrodny and Macedo also recorded an assist each. In goal, Solexey Calderon came up big with three key saves to preserve the shutout.

" It was a great overall performance, especially from the defense, who worked hard to keep Comstock scoreless all night," Robles said.

The Lady Vikings followed that performance by traveling to Marcellus for another conference match and earning a 5–1 win over the Wildcats.

Andrea Barajas and Magdaly Gonzalez each scored two goals, while Isabella Macedo added one. Madison Lennox led the playmaking with two assists, and Andrea Barajas also contributed with an assist in a strong team performance.

The Vikings now move to 4–3 overall and remain undefeated in conference play at 4–0.

## Mattawan baseball goes 3-3

Maxx Vanantwerp threw 4 innings allowing no runs on 2 hits, striking out six, against Forest Hills Eastern.

**By John Raffel**
Corresponding

MATTAWAN — Mattawan's baseball team last week finished 3-3 against some tough/ opponents.

Mattawan traveled to Forest Hills Eastern to take on the Division 2 defending state champions. We lost game 1 in a tough 6-5 loss," Mattawan coach Brett Vaughn said. "We could only muster four hits against a strong tandem of pitchers from FHE. Patrick Dougherty, Nolan Jominy, Liam Walsh, and Ryan Willis had our 4 hits. On the mound Kaden Jominy struck out 5 and walked zero, taking the loss in the game.

"In game 2 we flipped the script and won 13-0, with 14 hits and a strong pitching performance from Maxx Vanantwerp. Nolan Jominy led the offense with 3 hits, Brady Mickelson, Coleton Strong, and Ethan Saunders added a pair of hits apiece. Maxx Vanantwerp threw 4 innings allowing no runs on 2 hits, striking out six."

On Thursday, Mattawan beat Portage Central 6-3.

"We had 10 hits as a team and had our first home run of the season by Ethan Saudders," Vaughn said. "Coleton Strong and Brady Mickelson had three hits apiece. Liam Walsh threw our first complete game of the season, allowing 3 runs, 2 earned on 6 hits. He struck out 4 and walked 2. He took his record to 2-0 on the season.

"In game 2 we lost 5-2. Patrick Dougherty led the offense with three hits, and John Pelak added his first home run of the season. On the mound Nathan Fowler took the loss allowing five runs on five hits over 4.1 innings."

On Saturday, Mattawan won at Grandville 8-7. Patrick Dougherty, Nolan Jominy and Liam Walsh all had two hits apiece to lead the offense. Coleton Strong and Nolan Jominy threw the last 5 innings of the game, allowing only 2 hits and 1 run to hold on to the victory. Coleton Strong got the victory on the mound.

"In game 2 we lost to Swan Valley 9-0," Vaughn said. "The offense went cold only getting two hits. On the mound Josh Fritz, Logan Sytsma, and Lucas Koning combined to strike out 10 batters, but it was not enough to hold Swan Valley down."

## Allegan tennis team blanks South Haven

**By John Raffel**
Correspondent

SOUTH HAVEN — On Thursday April 23, it was Allegan over South Haven.

Singles:

No. 1 - Addy Fales, Allegan def. Addy Cook, South Haven, 0-6 , 0-6.

No. 2 - Camdyn Drozd, Allegan def. Harley Nail, South Haven, 1-6 , 0-6,

No. 3 - Kendall Halstead, Allegan def. Leah Becker, South Haven, 0-6 , 0-6.

No. 4 - Ava Thompson, Allegan def. Violet Burgoyne, South Haven, 0-6 , 1-6.

Doubles:

No. 1 - Madison Cook, Allegan - Ireland Dewey, Allegan def. Sarah Diaz-Salinas, South Haven - Maria Booth, South Haven, 0-6 , 1-6.

No. 2 - Taylor Fuller, Allegan - Hanna Kievit , Allegan def. Mireya Arvizu, South Haven - Sheyla Gonzalez, South Haven, 0-6 , 0-6.

No. 3 - Kaylee Haas, Allegan - Hailey Gauthier, Allegan def. Regan Nail, South Haven - Remmi Rigozzi, South Haven, 0-6 , 0-6.

No. 4 - Kaylee Haas, Allegan - Hailey Gauthier, Allegan def. Grace Armendariz, South Haven - Khloi Smith, South Haven, 0-6 , 0-6

## South Haven baseball beats Coloma

**By John Raffel**
Correspondent

SOUTH HAVEN — South Haven baseball won 8-7, over Coloma on April 22.. The game was tied at seven in the bottom of the seventh when Grayson Knox singled, scoring one run.

Quin Hayes earned the win for South Haven. He allowed np hits and zero runs over two-thirds of an inning, striking out one and walking none. Logan Hudson appeared in relief for South Haven.

South Haven had 13 hits in the game. Wyatt Dotson and Jake Bosma each collected three hits for South Haven. Chalupa went 2-for-4 at the plate and led the team with three runs batted in. Knox collected two hits for South Haven in four at bats.

South Haven beat Coloma 9-6 on Wednesday in the second game..

A fly out by Chalupa gave South Haven the lead, 8-6, in the bottom of the fifth.

Bosma earned the win for South Haven. He allowed six hits and six runs (two earned) over five innings, striking out five and walking three. Hayes got the save.

South Haven piled up 12 hits in the game. Schneider led South Haven Varsity Rams with three hits in four at bats. Hiatt and Chalupa each drove in two runs for South Haven . Bevevino and Hanny each collected multiple hits for South Haven.

## Paw Paw continues winning ways

**By John Raffel**
Correspondent

PAW PAW — Varsity baseball for Paw Paw traveled to Plainwell for a conference DH Wednesday, April 22.

In Game 1, the Red Wolves fell behind 1-0 early and came storming back for a convincing 7-2 victory. Remi Dempsey and Bryn Carlsen were lights out on the mound. Remi picked up the win going 4 plus innings, allowing 4 hits, 1 ER, and 4 K's. Bryn came in and shut the door for 2 plus innings, allowing 1 hit, 0 ER, and 3 K's. Caden Bowen led the offense by going 3-4, 2 RBIs, one run, and a stolen base.

Ryan Holmes went 2-2 with 2 walks, 2 RBIs, 2 runs, and a stolen base. Gavin Allers had two clutch hits and finished 2-3, 2 RBIs, a walk, and run scored.

"Gavin was a rock behind the plate too in the heat. Hayden Crifer added a double, RBI, and two walks. Carter Buhladded a double and hit by pitch in his three at bats. Bryn helped himself on the mound by going 1-1 with a run scored," Wolves coach Derek Vanderburg said

In Game 2, the Red Wolves were unable to overcome mistakes and the game ended in a 3-3 tie. Caden stayed hot at the plate going 3-3 with a double, RBI, SB, and 2 runs. Gavin went 1-3 with a key RBI single. Maverick Johnson picked up our the hit. Once again, Red Wolves pitching was in total control. Landen Geddes pitched four strong innings, allowing 1 ER, 4 H, 1 BB, and 2 K's. Bryn was lights out in his 2 innings pitched, 0 H, 0 ER, 0 BB, 3 K's.

Quick turnaround for Varsity baseball as they traveled to Coloma for a DH on Thursday. In Game 1 the Red Wolves scored early and often and cruised to a 14-2 victory. Caden was dominant on the mound and at the plate. Caden went 5 innings, allowing 5 hits, 0 ER, 1 BB, and 6 K's. Caden helped himself by going 3-5 with an RBI, R, and SB. Ryan pitched the final frame and allowed 0 ER, 2 H, and 2 K's. Ryan also had a big day at the plate going 3-4 with 3 RBI's, 1 BB, 2 R, and a SB. Gavin, Brayden, and Carson each had multi-hit games.

Gavin was 2-4 with 2 RBI's. Brayden went 2-3 with an RBI, BB, and 3 R. Carson went 2-3 with 2 RBI's, and 2 R. Haydin Criger added a double while Benny Flanders and Maverick also collected a hit.

In Game 2 the Red Wolves were outhit 8-4, but found a way to pull out a 6-5 victory to complete the sweep. Maverick was the winning pitcher going five strong innings, allowing 8 H, 4 ER, and 3 K's. Hayden picked up his third save on the season. The four hits were by Ryan, Hayden, Caden, and Carson. Caden and Carsen each went 1-2 with an RBI. Hayden and Ryan were 1-3 with a BB and 2 R. Maverick and Carter each added an RBI. The Red Wolves record now stands at 8-4-1.

Upcoming games:

April 28th- Home DH vs Sturgis

May 1st- Away single game vs Decatur

Rams shortstop Julia Wiley puts the tag on Coloma baserunner.

Kiersten Chalupa dives back safely into first base on a sacrifice bunt play under the watchful eye of coach Wilma Wilson.

## South Haven softball loses

**By John Raffel**
Correspondent

SOUTH HAVEN — Both teams were strong in pitching on Tuesday, April 21, but Coloma was just a little bit better at the plate in 3-2 victory over South Haven's softball game. Addison Dekoning started the game for South Haven and recorded 21 outs.

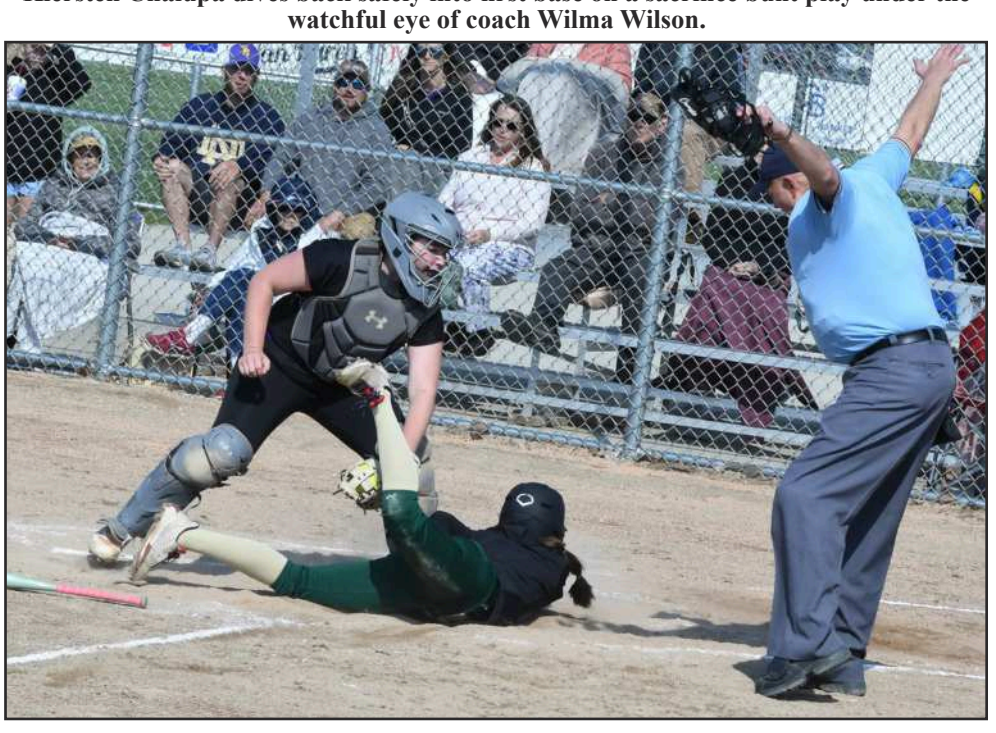
Coloma got on the board in the top of the fourth inning on an RBI single and two-run doubles.

Harris earned the win for Coloma. She gave up three hits and two runs (zero earned) over seven innings, striking out 11 and walking four.

Dekoning took the loss for the Rams. She went seven innings, allowing three runs on six hits, striking out eight and walking one.

Reagan Hahn and Madi Duda had one RBI apiece for South Haven Varsity Rams. South Haven didn't commit a single error. Hahn had the most chances in the field with nine.

Groendyk, the number seven hitter for Coloma, led the way with two runs batted in. She went 2-for-3 on the day. Harris and Groendyk each collected two hits for Coloma. Coloma turned one double play in the game.



Coloma baserunner beats the tag from Rams catcher Reagan Hahn.

## Bangor has big week of baseball

**By John Raffel**
Correspondent

BANGOR — Bangor's baseball team has gone 5-4-1 in it last 10 games and has a busy week coming up.

Bangor was set to be home on April 28 with Benton Harbor, at Marcellus on April 30 and one with Battle Creek Central on May 2.

Carson Pullins primarily plays left field and also pitches. Pullins has hit .571 during the streak. Pullins has an on-base percentage of .526 this season with a .379 batting average and nine walks. He has thrown first pitch strikes to 54 of the 97 batters they've faced this season.

Bangor has have a 7-4-1 record overall. Jaret McCoy has a 0.649 OBP and a 0.545 slugging percentage this season. Pullins leads Bangor with 15 and one-third innings pitched. Luke Remington leads Bangor with 58 total fielding chances this season. He is primarily a catcher.

Last week, Bangor we hosted the Cassopolis Rangers in a SW10 matchup.

"We started off the game very slow, falling behind 8-0 going into the bottom of the second," coach Nick Cox said. "We continued to chip away and ended up getting a walk off win in the bottom of the 7th, winning 13-12. Game 2, we kept it close but struggled with small ball in the last inning and ended up losing 6-3."

# FLETCHERS POND, A UNIQUE FISHERY

**Eric Payne with an bass caught and released**

We discussed Hamlin Lake, Houghton Lake, Cadillac, and Lake Mitchell. For a total change of pace, anglers should consider Fletcher's Pond. Fletchers Pond is a unique body of water. This stump field-covered reservoir covers 9,000 acres.

The drawing card for many is the outstanding bass fishing. This is truly a remarkable bass fishery. A one-of-a-kind fishery. You need to look hard to find water that is much deeper than twelve or fourteen feet.

And you need a screw loose if you try to run wide open. Oh, I see guys doing it, but you really need to know the lake. I will take things much slower.

Bluegill fishing really grabbed my attention. This lake is chock full of gills. Now, this is not a lake where we catch tons of monster gills. In some seasons, we do extremely well with our keepers.

Some anglers use a pop can or a dollar bill as an indicator of a keeper. Folks, those two items average closer to 6 1/4 inches. We want nothing less than 7 or 7.5 inches.

Some years we load up on seven-and-a-quarter- to eight-and-a-quarter-inch fish. In other seasons, we struggle to catch an honest seven-inch fish. Just a preface warning.

Fletcher's Pond is made for a bobber. Bobbers provide a stealth approach. It keeps your bait exactly where you want it and is snag-resistant. I started using slip floats back when my kids were young. Slip floats are easy to cast and can be fished in any depth.

We use a glow-in-the-dark ice-fishing teardrop tipped with either a wax worm or a piece of a worm. If you want to get fancier, consider the following two ideas.

Cast a one-inch Charlie Brewer Grub on a 1/64-ounce jig head. This petite presentation glides around and over the stumps efficiently. Casting a mini homemade worm harness rig is fun, exciting, and very productive. We tie up our harness rigs with either two size-eight hooks or two size-ten hooks. We space a half inch apart. This rig is really fun to cast, and yes, on occasion, you will snag up.

Bass rarely disappoints us. Plenty of them and enough eighteen-to-twenty-inch fish to keep things exciting. A friend of mine fishes here one week each season. He lands numerous bass over five pounds each vacation. He excels at flipping a jig and a pig.

I love throwing a spinnerbait. I rarely lose a spinner because when we fish shallow water, it's rarely down more than a foot. When we fish the edge of the channel or the one major drop-off or break line, we vary the time we allow the spinner to sink.

My second go-to bass bait would be the Charlie Brewer three-inch grub. We fish this on the original Charlie Brewer jighead. This is a near weedless presentation and works equally well around the stumps and along the river channel.

Each day, we spend some time searching out the crappie. Success varies from day to day. When we find them, we do well. Thus, the reason is a fill-in option.

When fishing, crappies are my first love. There is something magical about casting a small jig and feeling a light tap-tap as a crappie sucks it in. Hands down, my favorite all-time jig is the Brewer Crappie Slider Head and the Brewer Crappie Grub.

With this set-up, you can duplicate almost to the "T" what a swimming minnow looks like. Yellow, Chartreuse, and the Blue Ice with the Chartreuse tail are our favorites. Keep moving until a school is found, and then camp out and work the school.

Fletchers are full of pike. They run from dinky fish to some real nice fish. Only two lures are needed. The bass spinnerbaits and the Johnson Silver Minnow Spoon. Tip the spoon with a three-inch action tail from Charlie Brewer.

Jack's Landing is where we stay. They offer both cabins, duplexes, and a campground. They have a dandy tackle shop, and plenty of dock space. And the Speakeasy tavern is really cool. Remember to stop in at Bob's Gun and Tackle Shop before heading north.

JACK PAYNE

*Payne is a member of OWAA (outdoor writers association of America). He is an avid outdoorsperson who enjoys fishing, hunting, hiking and cooking. This column will hopefully enhance your outdoor experiences. "While I may have some knowledge, I am very fortunate that I do know many true experts that share their knowledge with me," said Payne. "Together, hopefully we all can learn and experience more fun in the great outdoors."*

*Payne resides in southwest Michigan. His column will appear weekly in the Courier Leader/ Flashes.*

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# =• PUBLIC NOTICE •=

**STATE OF MICHIGAN**
**COUNTY OF VAN BUREN**
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**Decedent's Estate**
Estate of **THOMAS WILLIAM STEMBAUGH** and the **T. WILLIAM STEMBAUGH REVOCABLE TRUST**
Date of Birth: January 22, 1932
**TO ALL CREDITORS:**
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS:**
The decedent, THOMAS WILLIAM STEMBAUGH, who lived at 300 White Oak Road, Lawton, Michigan 49065, died on February 21, 2026.
The decedent established the T. WILLIAM STEMBAUGH REVOCABLE TRUST on March 27,1992. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to JANEEN ANNETTE BARR, TRUSTEE of the T. WILLIAM STEMBAUGH REVOCABLE TRUST within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

TRUSTEE: JANEEN ANNETTE BARR
Address: 36802 County Road 673
Bangor, MI 49013
ATTORNEY: SYDNEY E. PARFET
Address: Howell Parfet Schau
350 East Michigan Avenue, Suite 500
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007
Telephone: (269) 382-5300

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**STATE OF MICHIGAN**
**COUNTY OF VAN BUREN**
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**Decedent's Estate**
Case No. | Judge (Cora Ruthruff)
Estate of **ISSAC J. RUTHRUFF**, decedent Date of Birth: January 8,1984 (01/08/1984)
**TO ALL CREDITORS:**
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS:**
The decedent, Issac J. Ruthruff, died September 13,2035 (09/13/2025).
Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Terry Ruthruff, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 212 E. Paw Paw St., SUITE #220, Paw Paw, MI 49079and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.
Date: 4/21/2026

**Attorney:**
Ajay Gupta #P45739
P.O. Box 428
Troy, MI 48099-0428
313-849-0567
**Personal Representative:**
Terry Ruthruff
231 S. Lagrave St.
Paw Paw, MI 49079
269-217-7585

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**STATE OF MICHIGAN**
**COUNTY OF VAN BUREN**
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**Decedent's Estate**
Case No. 2026-1062-DE
Estate of **ROGER LEROY OLSON**, decedent Date of Birth: February 9,1952 (02/09/1952)
**TO ALL CREDITORS:**
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS:**
The decedent, Roger Leroy Olson, died February 14,2026 (02/14/2026).
Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to FAYE HOMAN, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 212 E. Paw Paw St., SUITE #220, Paw Paw, MI 49079 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.
Date: 4/27/2026

**Attorney:**
Willis Law
Tyler Watt #P88826
491 W. South Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
269-492-1040
**Personal Representative:**
Faye Homan
6200 N. 7th St.
Kalamazoo, MI 49009
269-209-0066

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**STATE OF MICHIGAN**
**COUNTY OF VAN BUREN**
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**Decedent's Estate**
Case No. 2026 1040 DE
Judge Hon. Susan Metzger
Estate of **SUSAN ANN ARADO**, decedent
**TO ALL CREDITORS:**
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS:**
The decedent, Susan Ann Arado, died January 27,2026(01/27/2026).
Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to David R. Arado, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 212 E. Paw Paw St., SUITE #220, Paw Paw, MI 49079 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.
Date: 4/30/2026

**Attorney:**
Mark A. Powers #P63972
P.O. Box 543
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616-212-6015
**Personal Representative:**
David R. Arado
08237 Silver Lake Rd.
Grand Junction, MI 49056
708-205-8918

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**County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Lonnie Trulove Jr; Atty: Randall S. Miller & Associates, P.C. - Randall S. Miller & Associates, P.C.; 1st Pub: 4/30/2026; Atty File #: 23MI00162-3; Insurer: (unknown)**
**FORECLOSURE NOTICE**
**Attention homeowner:** If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
**NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY ADVERTISEMENT.** Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 01:00 PM, May 28, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. Default has been made in the conditions of a certain mortgage made by Lonnie Trulove Jr, a married man to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. as Mortgagee, as Nominee for Amerifirst Financial Corporation, its successors, and assigns, Mortgagee, dated January 22, 2015, and recorded on January 27, 2015, in Liber 1613, Page 810, Van Buren County Records, said mortgage was assigned to Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC by an Assignment of Mortgage dated July 31, 2025 and recorded July 31, 2025 in Liber 1781, Page 796, on which mortgage there is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of Seventy-Four Thousand Eight Hundred Fifty-Six and 59/100 ($74,856.59) including interest at the rate of 4.50000% per annum. Said premises are situated in the Township of Hartford, Van Buren County, Michigan, and are described as: That part of the Southeast quarter of Section 28, Town 3 South, Range 16 West, described as follows: Beginning on the East and West quarter line of said Section 28 at a point 1044.56 feet West of the East quarter post of said Section 28, thence West on said quarter line, 273.00 feet to the West line of the East half of the Southeast quarter, thence South 00 degrees 42 minutes 45 seconds East on said West line, 340.00 feet, thence East 273.00 feet, thence North 00 degrees 42 minutes 45 seconds West, 340.00 feet to the place of beginning. Commonly known as: 64469 66TH AVE, HARTFORD, MI 49057 If the property is eventually sold at foreclosure sale, the redemption period will be 6.00 months from the date of sale unless the property is abandoned or used for agricultural purposes. If the property is determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241 and/or 600.3241a, the redemption period will be 30 days from the date of sale, or 15 days after statutory notice, whichever is later. If the property is presumed to be used for agricultural purposes prior to the date of the foreclosure sale pursuant to MCL 600.3240, the redemption period is 1 year. Pursuant to MCL 600.3278, if the property is sold at a foreclosure sale, the borrower(s) will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. TO ALL PURCHASERS: The foreclosing mortgagee can rescind the sale. In that event, your damages are, if any, limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest. Dated: April 30, 2026 Randall S. Miller & Associates, P.C. Attorneys for Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC 43252 Woodward Avenue, Suite 180, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302, (248) 335-9200 Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Case No. 23MI00162-3

**(04-30)(05-21)**

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**County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Patrick Gillette; Atty: ANDREW BARNES - ANDREW BARNES; 1st Pub: 4/23/2026; Atty File #: (N/A); Insurer: (unknown)**
**NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY ADVERTISEMENT** Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following Mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 p.m., on May 21, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. THIS FIRM IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT, ANY INFORMATION WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICE AT THE NUMBER BELOW IF YOU ARE IN ACTIVE MILITARY DUTY. Default has occurred in the conditions of a Mortgage (the "Mortgage") made by PATRICK GILLETTE, a single man, as Mortgagor(s), to Horizon Bank. The Mortgage is dated June 2, 2010 and was recorded June 11, 2010 at Liber 1536, Page 318 of Van Buren County Records. The amount claimed to be due on said Mortgage and unpaid at the date of this Notice is FIFTY-THREE THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-EIGHT AND 45/100 ($53,158.45) DOLLARS, including interest on the applicable indebtedness at a variable rate which is currently 5.00% per annum. This sum will increase as additional interest, costs, expenses, and attorney fees accrue under the Mortgage and its related note and which are permitted under Michigan law after the date of this Notice. No legal or equitable proceedings have been instituted to recover the debt secured by the Mortgage, and the power of sale in the Mortgage has become operative by reason of the default. At the date and time as referenced previously in this Notice, the Mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the property herein described, or some part of them, at public auction, to the highest bidder, for the purpose of satisfying the amount due and unpaid on the Mortgage, along with interest due, the legal costs and charges of sale as allowed by statute and/or the Mortgage, and any taxes and insurance that the Mortgagee pays on or prior to the date of said sale. The property mentioned and described in the Mortgage, as located in the Township of Decatur, County of Van Buren, and State of Michigan, are more particularly described as follows: Commencing on the West line of Section 4, Town 4 South, Range 14 West, at a point where the centerline of the drainage ditch intersects said West Section line; thence South along said West Section line 200 feet; thence East at right angles to said West Section line 400 feet; thence North parallel with said West Section line to the center of said drainage ditch; thence Southwesterly along the centerline of said drainage ditch to the place of beginning; Address: 73131 42nd St., Decatur, MI 49045; Tax Parcel Nos.: 80-08-004-006-10 & 80-08-004-006-20; together with all existing or subsequently erected or affixed buildings, mobile/manufactured home or homes, improvements, and fixtures; all easements, rights of way, streets, roads, alleys, and public places, privileges, and appurtenances, public or private, now or later used in connection with the premises; and all rights to make divisions of the land that are exempt from the platting requirements of all applicable land division or platting acts, as amended from time to time. Attention Purchasers: the foreclosing Mortgagee reserves the right to cancel the sale prior to sale or to rescind this sale at any time. In that event, your damages, if any, will be limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at the sale, plus interest. If the mortgaged property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Attention Homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. The length of the redemption period will be one (6) six months from date of sale, unless the redemption period is shortened pursuant to MCL 600.3241a or MCL 600.3238, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of sale or as otherwise provided by statute. DATED: April 23, 2026 ANDREW W. BARNES (P70571) BUTZEL LONG P.C. ATTORNEYS FOR HORIZON BANK 317 Center Street South Haven, MI 49090 269-287-2010

**(04-23)(05-14)**

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**County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Chad Pickett; Atty: Schneiderman & Sherman, P.C. - Schneiderman & Sherman, PC; 1st Pub: 4/23/2026; Atty File #: 26-001137-1; Insurer: FNMA**
**SHORT FORECLOSURE NOTICE - VAN BUREN COUNTY Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement.** Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on May 28, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE: Mortgagor(s): Chad Pickett and Elizabeth Pickett, a husband and wife Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. ("MERS"), as mortgagee, for lender and lender`s successors and assigns Date of mortgage: November 1, 2024 Recorded on November 13, 2024, Liber 1772, on Page 109, Foreclosing Assignee (if any): The Huntington National Bank Amount claimed to be due at the date hereof: Two Hundred Four Thousand Four Hundred Forty-Nine and 03/100 Dollars ($204,449.03) Mortgaged premises: Situated in Van Buren County, and described as: The East 28 rods of the West 53 rods of the Southeast Quarter of Section 34, Town 1 South, Range 14 West, according to the Government Survey thereof Commonly known as 38724 24th Ave, Gobles, MI 49055 The redemption period will be 6 month from the date of such sale, unless abandoned under MCL 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period will be 30 days from the date of such sale, or 15 days from the MCL 600.3241a(b) notice, whichever is later; or unless extinguished pursuant to MCL 600.3238. If the above referenced property is sold at a foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of Act 236 of 1961, under MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. The Huntington National Bank Mortgagee/Assignee Schneiderman & Sherman P.C. 23938 Research Dr, Suite 300 Farmington Hills, MI 48335 248.539.7400 1591287

**(04-23)(05-14)**

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**County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Megan McLeod; Atty: Schneiderman & Sherman, P.C. - Schneiderman & Sherman, PC; 1st Pub: 4/23/2026; Atty File #: 26-000887-1; Insurer: (unknown)**
**SHORT FORECLOSURE NOTICE - VAN BUREN COUNTY Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement.** Notice is given under section 49c of the State Housing Development Authority Act of 1966, 1966 PA 346, MCL 125.1449c, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on May 21, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE: Mortgagor(s): Megan McLeod and Sean McDaniel, all as tenants in common Original Mortgagee: Neighborhood Loans, Inc. Date of mortgage: May 30, 2023 Recorded on July 3, 2023, Liber 1754, on Page 454, and re-recorded via Loan Modification recorded on May 30, 2025 in Liber 1779, on Page 490 Foreclosing Assignee (if any): Michigan State Housing Development Authority Amount claimed to be due at the date hereof: Two Hundred Twenty-Three Thousand Six Hundred Fifteen and 91/100 Dollars ($223,615.91) Mortgaged premises: Situated in Van Buren County, and described as: Commencing in the center of M-43 highway at a point South 45 degrees 21.5 minutes East 159 feet from the center of Section 24, Town 1 South, Range 17 West; thence South 45 degrees 18.5 minutes West 547.97 feet South parallel with the North and South 1/4 line 117.94 feet; thence North 45 degrees 18.5 minutes East 631.89 feet to center of M-43 highway; thence North 45 degrees 21.5 minutes West along center line 83.85 feet to point of beginning. Commonly known as 70907 M 43, South Haven, MI 49090 The redemption period will be 6 month from the date of such sale, unless abandoned under MCL 125.1449v, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale, or 15 days from the MCL 125.1449v(b) notice, whichever is later; or unless extinguished pursuant to MCL 600.3238. Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Michigan State Housing Development Authority Mortgagee/Assignee Schneiderman & Sherman P.C. 23938 Research Dr, Suite 300 Farmington Hills, MI 48335 248.539.7400 1591286

**(04-23)(05-14)**

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**County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Gary L Verstrate; Atty: Schneiderman & Sherman, P.C. - Schneiderman & Sherman, PC; 1st Pub: 4/16/2026; Atty File #: 26-000977-1; Insurer: (unknown)**
**SHORT FORECLOSURE NOTICE - VAN BUREN COUNTY Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement.** Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on June 04, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE: Mortgagor(s): Gary L. Verstrate and Linda F. Verstrate, husband and wife Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. ("MERS"), as mortgagee, for lender and lender`s successors and assigns Date of mortgage: May 8, 2018 Recorded on May 18, 2018, Liber 1668, on Page 815, Foreclosing Assignee (if any): loanDepot.com, LLC Amount claimed to be due at the date hereof: One Hundred Four Thousand One Hundred Twenty-Two and 88/100 Dollars ($104,122.88) Mortgaged premises: Situated in Van Buren County, and described as: THE WEST SEVEN AND ONE-HALF (7 1/2) ACRES OF THE NORTH FORTY-SEVEN AND ONE-HALF (47 1/2) ACRES OF THE NORTHEAST FRACTIONAL QUARTER (1/4) OF SECTION 5 (5), TOWN TWO (2) SOUTH, RANGE FIFTEEN (15) WEST. Commonly known as 54961 24th Ave, Bangor, MI 49013 The redemption period will be 6 month from the date of such sale, unless abandoned under MCL 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period will be 30 days from the date of such sale, or 15 days from the MCL 600.3241a(b) notice, whichever is later; or unless extinguished pursuant to MCL 600.3238. If the above referenced property is sold at a foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of Act 236 of 1961, under MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. loanDepot.com, LLC Mortgagee/ Assignee Schneiderman & Sherman P.C. 23938 Research Dr, Suite 300 Farmington Hills, MI 48335 248.539.7400 1590678

**(04-16)(05-07)**

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**County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Linda Buell; Atty: Orlans; 1st Pub: 4/9/2026; Atty File #: 26-003115; Insurer: GNMA**
**Attention homeowner:** If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM on MAY 7, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Default has been made in the conditions of a mortgage made by Linda Buell, to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Team Mortgage Company LLC, its successors and assigns, Mortgagee, dated March 29, 2024 and recorded April 30, 2024 in Liber 1765, Page 405 Van Buren County Records, Michigan. Said mortgage is now held by NewRez LLC, by assignment. There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of One Hundred Eighty Thousand Nine Hundred Ninety-Nine and 9/100 Dollars ($180,999.09).
Under the power of sale contained in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given that said mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at public venue at the place of holding the circuit court within Van Buren County, Michigan at 1:00 PM on MAY 7, 2026.
Said premises are located in the Village of Mattawan, Van Buren County Michigan, and are described as:
Lot 3, Except the South 12 feet thereof, Block 1, Kinne's Addition to the Village of Mattawan, according to the recorded plat in Liber P of Plats, Page 163, Van Buren County Records.
57177 S Main St, Mattawan, Michigan 49071
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA §600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale.
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period. FinCEN reporting will be required of all successful purchasers, absent a lawful exemption.
Dated: April 9, 2026
File No. 26-003115
Firm Name: Orlans Law Group

*continues on page B4*

## NOTICE OF GENERAL ELECTION
## TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2026

TO THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF

ANTWERP TOWNSHIP and PAW PAW TOWNSHIP

**COUNTY OF VAN BUREN, STATE OF MICHIGAN**

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that a Special Election will be held in the townships listed above for the purpose of the following millage proposal on **Tuesday, May 5, 2026.**

**LOCAL PROPOSALS**

**VILLAGE OF PAW PAW**
**VILLAGE PARK RENEWAL PROPOSAL**

Shall the previously voted increase in general ad valorem taxes within the Village of Paw Paw, as established pursuant to the General Law Village Act, Act 3 of the Public Acts of Michigan of 1895, currently 1.4792 mills ($1.4792 per $1,000 of taxable value) be renewed and levied in the years 2026-2030, both inclusive, and shall an additional 0.0208 mill ($0.0208 per $1,000 of taxable value) be approved and levied to restore previous millage reductions under the "Headlee Amendment" since this millage was last approved, resulting in the levy of 1.5 mills ($1.50 per $1,000 of taxable value), subject to reduction as provided by law, on taxable property in the Village?

The revenue received by the Village will be used by the Village to make improvements to and fund the operational and maintenance costs of the Village's parks. It is estimated that a levy of 1.5 mills would provide revenue of $157,615 in the first calendar year. The revenue from this millage levy will be disbursed to the Village of Paw Paw, for distribution to the Park Fund.

Voters can obtain full text of ballot language at the local clerk's office or Van Buren County Clerk's office.

Persons with special needs as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the appropriate clerk's office.

**NOTICE**
Full text of the ballot proposal(s) may be obtained at the listed Township Office. **A sample ballot may be viewed at mi.gov/vote.**

Absentee ballots are available for all elections; registered voters may contact the local clerk to obtain an application for an absent voter ballot.

To comply with the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), voting instructions will be available in audio format and in Braille. Arrangements for obtaining the instructions in these alternative formats can be made by contacting the township/city clerk in advance of the election. All polling locations are accessible for voters with disabilities. Persons with disabilities needing accommodations as defined by the American with Disabilities Act should contact the local clerk's office.

The polls will be open from 7:00 am to 8:00 pm and all clerks will be open 7:00 am – 8:00 pm on Tuesday, May 5, 2026.

**ANTWERP TOWNSHIP**
Antwerp Township Hall
24821 Front St.
Mattawan
Chantel Reyna, Twp Clerk

**PAW PAW TOWNSHIP**
Paw Paw Twp Hall
114 North Gremps St.
Paw Paw
Rebecca Payne, Twp Clerk

# =• PUBLIC NOTICE •=

*continues from page B3*

PLLC
Firm Address: 1650 West Big Beaver Road, Troy MI 48084
Firm Phone Number: (248) 502.1400

**(04-09)(04-30)**

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APC Towers, LLC is proposing to construct a 199-foot tall (overall height) monopole telecommunications structure located off 34th Avenue, Covert, Van Buren County, Michigan (42° 17' 40.3" N, 86° 14' 28.4" W). The proposed tower is anticipated to utilize FAA Style E (medium intensity, dual red/white strobes) lighting.

APC Towers, LLC invites comments from any interested party on the impact the proposed undertaking may have on any districts, sites, buildings, structures, or objects significant in American history, archaeology, engineering, or culture that are listed or determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Comments may be sent to Environmental Corporation of America, ATTN: Annamarie Howell, 1375 Union Hill Industrial Court, Suite A, Alpharetta, GA 30004 or via email to publicnotice@eca-usa.com. Ms. Howell can be reached at (770) 667-2040 x 108 during normal business hours. Comments must be received within 30 days of the date of this notice.

Any interested party may request further environmental review of the proposed action under the FCC's National Environmental Policy Act rules, 47 CFR §1.1307, by notifying the FCC of the specific reasons that the action may have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. This request must only raise environmental concerns and can be filed online using the FCC pleadings system at https://wireless2.fcc.gov/UlsEntry/pleadings/pleadingsType.jsp or mailed to FCC Requests for Environmental Review, Attn: Ramon Williams, 45 L Street, Washington, DC 20554 within 30 days of the date of the National Notice as referenced within the Antenna Structure Registration (ASR) application. Mailed pleadings must include a request to waive the electronic filing requirement along with an explanation of why an electronic filing cannot be made. Refer to File No. A1382983 when submitting the request and to view the specific information about the proposed action. 26-000874/DMG

## LAWTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

**INVITATION TO BID FOR LAWTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL PARKING LOT SEALING, CRACK FILLING, ASPHALT REPAIRS AND STRIPING ON OUR HIGH SCHOOL AND MIDDLE SCHOOL CAMPUS**

The Board of Education, Lawton Community Schools, is requesting bids for parking lot sealing, crack filling, asphalt repairs and striping on our High School and Middle School Campus.

**Bidding documents are available on our website at www.lawtoncs.org**

Bids are due in the Office of the Superintendent,
101 Primary Way, Lawton, MI 49065 on May 11, 2026, by 2:00 P.M.

## LAWTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

**INVITATION TO BID FOR LAWTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL HVAC JACE SYSTEM UPGRADES AND REPLACEMENTS**

The Board of Education, Lawton Community Schools, is requesting bids for HVAC JACE system upgrades and replacements.

**Bidding documents are available on our website at www.lawtoncs.org**

Bids are due in the Office of the Superintendent,
101 Primary Way, Lawton, MI 49065 on May 12, 2026, by 2:00 P.M.

The Van Buren Intermediate School District is now accepting bids for installation of a cement pad, safety posts, security fencing, and upgraded electric service at the Transportation Facility, 635 Blackman Street, Lawrence, MI 49064 as outlined in the bid packet. Bid packets are available for download at www.vbisd.org under District Services – Business Office. Bids are due **May 5, 2026, at 2:00 PM** at the Van Buren Intermediate School District Business Office, 490 S. Paw Paw Street, Lawrence, MI 49064, at which time bids will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids received after that time will not be accepted and returned unopened. The Board of Education shall not accept a bid unless it includes both sworn and notarized familial affidavit and Iran linked business affidavit. The Van Buren Intermediate School District reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to waive any irregularities which it deems to be in the best interest of Van Buren Intermediate School District, and the right to award the contract to other than lowest bidder.

## COMMUNITY

## PPPS Senior Citizens Luncheons

At Paw Paw Public Schools, we are committed to fostering connections among our schools and the community to increase authentic opportunities for students and improve civic engagement.

All Paw Paw area seniors citizens aged 60 and older are invited to attend and learn about the great things happening in the schools!

There is a suggested $6 donation, but participation is open to all seniors regardless of ability to donate.

**Paw Paw High School Cafeteria**
**30609 Red Arrow Hwy.**

**All luncheons begin at 1:30 p.m., and doors open at 1:15 p.m.**

**Mar. 13, 2026**
Corned Beef & Cabbage, Roasted Potatoes with Carrots, Biscuit & Cookies

**Apr. 10, 2026**
Alfredo Pasta with Chicken, Garlic Bread, Broccoli, Carrots with Cauliflower & Chocolate Cream Pie

**May 8, 2026**
Fried Chicken, Baked Beans, Potato Salad & Apple Pie

## VILLAGE OF MATTAWAN
## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Village of Mattawan Council will hold a Public Hearing to consider adopting a budget and tax levy for the 2026-2027 Fiscal Year.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a public hearing scheduled May 11, 2026 will be held before the Village Council at 7:00 PM in the Village meeting room, at which all interested persons will be given an opportunity to be heard.

**The proposed budget will take effect July 1, 2026 and end June 30, 2027. The proposed tax levy is 4.2646 mills plus 6.0 mills for police special assessment. The Council may consider a different levy amount including a levy in excess of 4.2646 mills plus 6.0 mills for the police special assessment.**

Budget Summary:

| | Revenue | Expenses |
|---|---|---|
| General Fund | $ 951,470 | $ 951,470 |
| Major Street Fund | $ 2,120,523 | $ 2,120,523 |
| Local Street Fund | $ 403,996 | $ 403,996 |
| Police Operating Fund | $ 856,800 | $ 856,800 |
| DDA Fund | $ 406,000 | $ 406,000 |
| Building Inspection Fund | $ 77,525 | $ 77,525 |
| Police Cont. Education Fund | $ 16,516 | $ 16,516 |
| Justice Training Fund | $ 3,756 | $ 3,756 |
| Metro Act Fund | $ 113,499 | $ 113,499 |
| Sewer Fund | $ 1,370,200 | $ 1,370,200 |
| Water Fund | $ 937,805 | $ 937,805 |
| Motor Pool DPW | $ 316,550 | $ 316,550 |
| MPD Capital Project Fund | $ 90,000 | $ 90,000 |
| Total | $ 7,664,640 | $ 7,664,640 |

This meeting will be held at the address below. Please send all written comments to:

Village of Mattawan
24221 Front Avenue
Mattawan, MI 49071
offices@mattawanmi.com

(269) 668-2128

Jolie Storm-Artis
Village Clerk

A copy of the complete proposed budget can be reviewed at the Village offices, Monday - Friday 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM.

## MSHDA
MICHIGAN STATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

April 9, 2026

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR THE STATE OF MICHIGAN'S DRAFT ANNUAL ACTION PLAN**

Prior to submission for further funding from the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office of Community Planning and Development, Michigan is required to publish an Annual Action Plan document for public review and comment tied to the State's five-year Consolidated Plan. The Annual Action Plan proposes an action strategy by which needs will be addressed and reflects activities undertaken between July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027.

The **comment period** will commence on Thursday, April 9, 2026, and end on Monday, May 11, 2026. **In-person public hearings** will be held on Wednesday, April 15, 2026, from 9:00-9:30a.m. at the MSHDA Meeting at Eagle Eye Golf & Banquet Center, 1550 Chandler Rd., Bath, MI 48808 and on Tuesday, May 5, 2026, from 1:00-2:00p.m. at the MSHDA Detroit office, Cadillac Place Building, 3028 W. Grand Boulevard, Suite 4-600, Detroit, MI 48202. **A special virtual public hearing** will be held on Monday, May 4, 2026 from 5:00-6:00 p.m. via Microsoft Teams, **Join:** https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/26690235843816?p=cNIlpIqOL0TI7gCv04, Meeting ID: 266 902 358 438 16, Passcode: ir68eY9K OR call in (audio only) 1-248-509-0316, 447314986#, Phone Conference ID: 447 314 986#.

**Introduction**
The Annual Action Plan consists of funding by applicable formula programs: HOME, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and all related programs including CDBG Disaster Recovery, Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDs (HOPWA), the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), the Recovery Housing Program (RHP) as applicable, and the Housing Trust Fund (HTF).
The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) is responsible for preparing the five year plan, annual action plans, as well as the annual Michigan Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) and soliciting comments from the public regarding the outcomes tied to the draft Plan and reporting outcomes on an annual basis thereafter. A link to the draft annual action plan can be found at https://www.michigan.gov/mshda/neighborhoods/michigan-consolidated-plan.

All interested parties are invited to submit written comments directly related to the draft Michigan Annual Action Plan. Information gathered during the written comment period will be used to prepare the Michigan Annual Action Plan for submission.

Individuals and organizations may submit written comments to Tonya Joy and Pierre-Denise Gilliam, 735 East Michigan Avenue, P.O. Box 30044, Lansing, MI 48909. **Written comments must be received no later than May 11, 2026**. Comments can also be submitted to the MSHDA Consolidated Plan Coordinator via e-mail to mshda-ndd@michigan.gov.

Copies of the Michigan Annual Action Plan may be downloaded free of charge from the MSHDA website link above.

Special Assistance: Feedback is encouraged from mobility-challenged individuals. Persons with disabilities needing accommodations for effective participation should contact the MSHDA Neighborhood Development Division at 517-335-2524 to request mobility, visual, hearing, or other assistance.

Equal Opportunity Lender

## VILLAGE OF MATTAWAN
### PLANNING COMMISSION
### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the Village of Mattawan Planning Commission will consider a **Special Land Use Request** received from Tim Spiech, **to allow for the construction of an indoor recreation facility at 56409 and 56509 Village Center Circle, Mattawan property ID # 80-46-701-028-00 and 80-46-701-027-00** in the Village of Mattawan.

1170-A28 13-3-13 1506-779 1665-756 1671-470 1737-151 1761-735 *** UNIT 28 THE SHOPS AT MCGILLEN'S CROSSING CONDOMINIUM TOGETHER WITH RIGHTS IN THE COMMON ELEMENTS AS DESCRIBED IN THE MASTER DEED RECORDED IN LIBER 1508, PAGE 884 AND ANY AMENDMENTS TO SAME. *** SPLIT ON 21 OCTOBER 2008 FROM 80-46-700-080-00 FOR 2009.

1170-A27 13-3-13 1506-779 1665-756 1671-470 1737-151 1761-735 *** UNIT 27 THE SHOPS AT MCGILLEN'S CROSSING CONDOMINIUM TOGETHER WITH RIGHTS IN THE COMMON ELEMENTS AS DESCRIBED IN THE MASTER DEED RECORDED IN LIBER 1508, PAGE 884 AND ANY AMENDMENTS TO SAME. *** SPLIT ON 21 OCTOBER 2008 FROM 80-46-700-080-00 FOR 2009.

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that the request will be considered by the Planning Commission at their meeting to be held on **May 20, 2026 @ 7:00 PM** for the purpose of receiving public comment regarding the proposed special land use. All interested persons will be given an opportunity to be heard.

This facility is designed to provide space for youth and adult athletic activities focused on basketball training, leagues, and tournaments. Operated as managed environment offering scheduled practices, games, and skill development. Also, opportunities for volleyball and pickleball are planned. More details of this project will be discussed at the hearing. We encourage the public to attend to express their opinions and learn about this project.

The meeting will be held in the Village Office meeting room at the address below. Please send all written comments to:

Village of Mattawan
24221 Front Avenue
Mattawan, MI 49071
(269) 668-2128
offices@mattawanmi.com

Jolie Storm-Artis
Village Clerk
April 22, 2026

## ANTWERP TOWNSHIP
## VAN BUREN COUNTY
## TREE PRESERVATION SPECIAL ASSESSMENT ANNUAL HEARING

**TO: ALL RECORD OWNERS OF OR PARTIES IN INTEREST IN LAND IN THE SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICT DESCRIBED BELOW:**

**WHEREAS** Antwerp Township has an existing special assessment district pursuant to 1954 PA 188 ("Act 188") for tree preservation measures in the Higley's Orchard Downs subdivision known as the Higley's Orchard Downs Tree Preservation Special Assessment District. The district's boundaries include all lots and parcels of land located within the Higley's Orchard Downs subdivision, located in Antwerp Township, Van Buren County, MI.

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the annual public hearing on the cost estimate and assessment roll for the Higley's Orchard Downs Tree Preservation Special Assessment District will be held on May 12, 2026, commencing at 6:30 pm at the Township Hall, 24821 Front Avenue Mattawan, MI 49071. At the public hearing, the Township Board will hear and consider any objections to the proposed cost estimate and assessment roll and may confirm or amend the special assessment roll for 2026. A copy of the cost estimate and assessment roll is on file with the Township Clerk and may be inspected at the Township Hall during regular business hours.

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that the total cost for tree preservation treatment measures for 2026 is estimated to be $4,600.00+ (publication fees). The assessment to each property owner in the Higley's Orchard Downs subdivision is estimated to be approximately **$100 per parcel.**

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that the owner or any person having an interest in property within the special assessment district may file a written appeal with the Michigan Tax Tribunal within thirty (30) days after confirmation of the special assessment roll. Appearance and protest at the public hearing on the special assessment roll are required in order to appeal the special assessment to the Michigan Tax Tribunal. An owner or other party of interest or his or her agent may (1) appear in person at the hearing to protest the special assessment, or (2) file his or her appearance or protest by letter before the close of the hearing using the address below.

The Township Board shall maintain a record of parties who appear to protest at the hearing. If the hearing is terminated or adjourned for the day before a party is provided the opportunity to be heard, a party whose appearance was recorded shall be considered to have protested the special assessment in person.

Antwerp Township will make accommodations to individuals with disabilities. Persons needing accommodations should contact the Township Clerk at the phone number below not less than four (4) days before the public hearing.

**ANTWERP TOWNSHIP**
Chantel Reyna, Clerk
24821 Front Avenue
Mattawan, MI 49071
Phone: (269) 668-2615

# Lawton soccer girls win

**By John Raffel**
Correspondent

LAWTON — Lawton opened its girls homestand Wednesday night at Packer Field, defeating Constantine 4-1 in what assistant coach JD Boothby said was "a dominant performance from start to finish.

"The Blue Devils controlled the pace early and never let up, using relentless pressure on both ends of the field to keep Constantine on its heels throughout the match. Freshman Maddie Vette led the offensive charge with two goals, continuing her strong debut season. Junior Jaelyn Auton and senior Maya Tag each added a goal to round out the scoring," Boothby reported.

"Lawton's attack was fueled by strong playmaking in the midfield, highlighted by junior Lilleonah Mandujano's two assists. Auton and Allyson French also contributed assists, helping create consistent scoring opportunities. Defensively, the Blue Devils were just as sharp. Seniors Taylor Whipple and Karen Laviolette, along with freshman Amelia Benavidez, anchored a back line that limited Constantine's chances all night. Sophomore goalkeeper Lila Karsen turned in an outstanding performance in net, with the only goal allowed coming on a penalty kick."

Boothy by added: "With strong possession and a high-energy press, Lawton dictated the game from start to finish, earning a well-rounded team victory to kick off a four-game homestand."

# Lawrence track has strong performance

**By John Raffel**
Correspondent

LAWRENCE — Lawrence track teams turned in a steady performance Friday at the Red Arrow Invitational, highlighted by several podium finishes in the throws and a strong list of personal-best marks across the lineup.

Lawrence placed sixth for the girls and seventh for the boys.

"The girls were led by Carolina Mancera, who earned podium spots in both throwing events with second-place finishes in the shot put and discus," coach Tony Devalued said. "Freshman Zoey Soppelsa added a third-place finish in the 400 meters. The team also collected several personal bests, including Kaylin Leyva and Lucy Patlan in the 200 meters, Alex Strauch in the 400, Nadia Brzost in the discus, and Evelyn Waite in the shot put.

"On the boys side, senior throwers delivered two podium results. Alexander Gardner took first in the shot put, while Parker Kelson-Johnson placed second in the discus. The boys also posted a strong list of personal-best performances throughout the track events. Andon Offord recorded a personal best (PB) in the 100 meters, while Colton Anders and Christian Barboza-Gutierrez added PBs in the 200. "Xavier Glover and Mateo Mancera each hit PBs in the 800 meters. Distance runner Evan Broyles posted PBs in both the 1600 and 3200, and Shadow Bebe added a PB in the 300 hurdles."

# • CLASSIFIEDS •

**• WANTED •**

**WE BUY OLD BASEBALL CARDS, OTHER SPORTS MEMORABILIA AND OLD VINTAGE COINS. CAN BE REACHED AT 517-416-1629. WE PAY CASH.**

**CLARK'S AUTO PARTS, INC.** is buying cars, trucks & all metals for recycling. Lawrence, 674-4905 or 1-800-707-8650.

**STANDING TIMBER.** Top Michigan lumber manufacturer seeking landowners with 25 or more mature hardwood trees to sell. Qualityhardwoodsinc.com • 517-566-8061.

**• SERVICES •**

**TIM'S STUMP GRINDING SERVICE-** I believe in respectable service. 269-299-5052, 269-624-6884.

**HAULING, CLEANING RECYCLING.** Moving service. Right Quick Hauling. Dan Wydick, Dustin Wydick, Daniel Wydick, 423-8545. Serving since 1994.

**FIELD PLUMBING & HEATING, INC.** Services all brands of heating & cooling equipment in your home or business. 24/7 service for over 50 years, 269-674-3839.

**BUYING JUNK CARS, trucks, scrap metal and farm machinery. Kalamazoo Metal Recyclers, 1525 King Highway, Kalamazoo. 269-381-1315.**

**CALL A PRO HANDYMAN SERVING LAWRENCE AND SURROUNDING AREAS 269-903-6397.**

**PERRY'S PERFECT PITCH PIANO TUNING** Homes-Churches-Schools, Call 269-999-4440

**• FREE •**

**FREE ROOFING TAR** 5 gallon buckets or 55 gallon drum, 269- 599-4561.

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**Call (269) 657-3072 or 657-5080**
**BEFORE MONDAY AT 5PM**
*www.wilcoxnewspaper.com*

**MEDICARE GURU**
Call
Janet Bontrager
Insurance Advisor
(269) 998-6977

LAWTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING
ON THE AMENDMENT OF THE 2025-2026
BUDGET AND THE PROPOSED 2026-27 BUDGET

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that on May 18, 2026, at seven o'clock p.m. at Lawton High School, in Lawton, Michigan, the Board of Education of Lawton Community Schools will hold a public meeting to consider the District's proposed amendment of the 2025-26 budget and the proposed 2026-27 budget.

The Board may not adopt its proposed 2026-27 budget until after a public hearing. A copy of the proposed 2026-2027 budget, including the proposed property tax millage rate, is available for public inspection during normal business hours at 101 Primary Way, Lawton, Michigan.

**The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be a subject of this hearing.**

This notice is given by order of the Board of Education.

Larissa Hunt Secretary

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